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COMPLIMENTARY

The Advent

इदं श्रेष्ठं ज्योतिषां ज्योतिरागात् ....

अप प्रागात् तमः ।

Lo, the supreme Light of lights is come—

gone is darkness.

Rigveda I. 113

The ADVENT

AUGUST, 1956

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Human beings are capable of withdrawing from the Divine—and they often do it; but for the Divine to withdraw from human beings, that is an impossbility.

THE MOTHER

Vol. XIII. No. 3 August, 1956

THE ADVENT

The Divine gives itself to those who give themselves without reserve and in all their parts to the Divine. For them the calm, the light, the power, the bliss, the freedom, the wideness, the heights of knowledge, the seas of Ananda. - - - - *Sri Aurobindo.*

EDITORIALS*

HUMAN BIRTH

LAST week I spoke of birth and how a soul enters into a body. I told you that the body is formed in a very unsatisfactory manner almost in the case of every person, the exceptions are so rare that one need not mention them. I told you that because of this obscure birth man is made to carry with him quite a bundle of things which later on he has generally to get rid of, if he wishes to progress truly in life. I told you in effect that you are made to come by force, conditions are imposed upon you by force, and by force you obey the laws of heredity. Now I am asked, who or what is it that forces? I shall answer as clearly as possible.

The body is formed by a man and a woman who are the father and the mother; these when they form the body have no means to ask of the being whom they are bringing into the world whether he likes it or whether it is agreeable to his destiny. They impose upon the body, by the force of necessity, an atavism, an environment and subsequently an education

* Based on Mother's Talks to the Children of the Ashram.

which are almost always obstacles to future growth. A growing soul or a soul fullgrown taking birth in a body has to fight against these circumstances that are forced upon him by the animal birth in order to find his true path and discover his own self in its fullness.

It is possible, however, for the parents, instead of doing the thing in the animal way, driven by mere instinct and desire, most of the time even without wanting it, to do it with a conscious will, aspiring, praying almost that the body they are about to bring forth should be a form suitable to clothe a soul coming at their call. I have known people,—there are not many, of course, still there are some,—who chose especial circumstances, prepared themselves, holding an attitude of concentration, meditation and aspiration, invoking some exceptional being to come into the body they were to form. For that one must have also an occult knowledge which people generally do not possess.

In ancient times, in some civilisations and even now in some countries the expectant woman is put specially in a surrounding of beauty and harmony and peace and ease and very normal physical conditions so that the coming child may be formed under the best circumstances. Evidently this is as it should be, for it is within human possibilities. Human beings have developed enough not to consider it as an exceptional thing. And yet in fact, it is an exceptional thing, for there are very few people who think of it, most are in the habit of producing children without giving a thought to it. But the least that is expected of man is that he should be somewhat conscious and do things he has to do in the best of conditions.

Now, a fully formed conscious soul wanting to take birth looks generally from its psychic domain for a corresponding psychic light upon some place on earth. In its previous birth, before leaving the earthly atmosphere, it chose, as the result of its total experience in that life, the conditions of its future life, not in details, but more or less in a general way. Such cases are very exceptional. Here perhaps we can speak of it, but for the majority of the human population, even among the most educated, the question does not arise.

Normally we are dealing with a soul that is growing, which is in the process of its growth. Now, there are all the stages of growth, from the tiniest spark that is becoming a little light up to the fully conscious and fully formed being. This ascent of the soul in order to become a mature conscious being, having its own will and deciding its own destiny, takes thousands of years.

When, however, it is a free and conscious soul that seeks to take a body again upon earth, it begins to work upon the body even before the birth. Such being the case, it has no reason not to accept the inconveniences that result from the ignorance of the parents. It has chosen its place for a reason which is a reason not of ignorance: it saw a light—which may be simply a light of possibility; but there was a light and that is why it came there. And when from the domain of the psychic it looks upon the earth and has chosen its place of birth, the choice has sufficient discernment in it not to have made a gross mistake.

In any case, even in the very best of situations, when a soul comes down consciously and when it has consciously worked in the formation of the physical body, so long as the body is formed in the usual animal way, the soul will have to struggle and to correct all that comes from this human animality.

The parents have naturally a particular formation, they have a particular kind of good or bad health; at the very best, they have a lot of atavistic tendencies, habits, subconscious and even conscious complexes, deriving from their own birth, their environment and the life they led. And even if they are remarkable people, in their own way, usually they carry a quantity of things that are contrary to the true psychic life, I mean, even if they are the very best, the most conscious. And when the parents have done their utmost to give their children the best education, the children come in contact with all kinds of other people who have a great influence upon them especially when they are very young; these influences enter into the subconscious and they have to be fought against later on.

So I say, because of the way in which the body is brought into being at present, you have to face innumerable difficulties coming more or less from the subconscient that rise to the surface with which you have to fight if you want to be free entirely and develop normally.

A SIGN AND A SYMBOL

It is said that if you see a shooting star and make a vow at that time, the vow is sure to be fulfilled. Is it true?

It means that you must be able to formulate your aspiration during the time the star is visible, that is to say, a very short time. Now, if an aspiration can be formed and formulated in such a short time, it shows that

the aspiration is there all the while quite at the front of your consciousness. Of course, the thing is true of the spiritual aspiration only: it is not applicable to matter of ordinary life. So I say that if you are capable of articulating your aspiration in a split second, it means that the object of your aspiration lies in front and dominates your consciousness. And necessarily whatever dominates your consciousness is likely to be quickly realised.

I had the occasion to make the experiment and have the experience. It happened exactly as you say. I saw a shooting star and as it passed, at the precise moment, leaped out of my consciousness the words: *To realise for my body union with the Divine.* And before the year ended, it was done.

Obviously, the star was not the cause. It was because the thing dominated my consciousness, I thought of nothing but that, I willed nothing but that, I acted not but for that. Usually, it seems, it takes a whole life time to have the realisation—the minimum is thirty-five years, it is said. But it was done in my case within twelve months.

It was because I was wholly concentrated upon the aspiration that I could formulate it in the twinkling of an eye that the passage of the star represents—not as a mere vague impression—but in clear precise words: *To realise for the body union with the Divine.* What is important is not the star, but the aspiration. There is no need of a shooting star to be there in order to have the experience quickly, what is needed is that the whole being must concentrate its will upon one point.

DIVINE LIVING

We always give the name "Divine" to all that we are not and want to become, all that seems infinitely higher than not only everything we have done but everything we can possibly do, all that is beyond our present capacity and conception.

I am perfectly sure that if we went back into the past a few thousands of years, we would find that when one spoke of the Divine it was of a being somewhat like one of the "overmental" gods. But now, the way of living proper to these overmental divinities who governed the earth and created many things upon earth for a very long time, seems to us very inferior to what we conceive as the Supramental. This Supramental again which we now call the Divine and which we seek to bring down upon earth, will have the same effect upon us a few thousand years hence as the Overmental has upon us now.

In other words, in the manifestation, in His Self-expression the Divine is progressive. Outside and beyond manifestation, He is something we cannot conceive of. But when He manifests himself in this status of constant becoming, He manifests more and more of Himself, as if He has reserved for the final end the most beautiful things of His being.

As the world progresses, what He expresses of himself in the world becomes more and more the Divine.

Sri Aurobindo has used the word Supramental in order to be clear to people who live in the evolutionary external consciousness and who are aware of the way in which the terrestrial world has developed, telling them that it is something greater than the creation of man whom he always calls mental being. He calls it supra-mental to say that it is beyond mind.

But we can also say that it is something more divine than what has been manifested before. For the Infinity is there; that has no limit. Thus there will always be a growing perfection. What appears to us as imperfect today must have appeared as something perfect to which certain epochs of history yearned and aspired.

And there is no reason why the movement should stop. If it stopped t would mean an end of things—a new *pralaya.*

25-1-1956

DOING FOR HER SAKE

Whatever you do—study or sports—you must think of the Divine in loing it. It is not a very difficult thing after all. At first you may do it s a kind of preparation to make you capable of receiving the divine force, nd then as service to help in the collective work. You can do it not for ersonal gain but in order to be ready for the Divine Work.

This seems to me indispensable. If you keep the ordinary point of iew, you will always find yourself in conditions that are not wholly satisictory and incapable of receiving all the forces that you can receive.

If you are doing long jump, for example, it should not be merely for ie pleasure of doing it, it is with the idea of making your body more perfect i its functioning, an instrument more fit to receive the divine forces id to manifest them.

Indeed, everything that you do must be done in this spirit. Otherwise

you do not profit by the opportunity, the favourable circumstances that ar given to you.

The Consciousness is there pervading everything and seeking t manifest in all movements. And if you, on your side, tell yourself that th effort, the progress you make is to enable you to receive this Consciousnes and to manifest it, then the work will naturally be done much better an more quickly.

And this seems to me to be the most elementary thing. For, to te you the truth, I would be astonished if it were otherwise. For your presenc at a place organised as it is would have no meaning if it were not for tha What would be its use? There are any number of universities and schoo in the world that are much better manned and equipped than ours. If yo are here, it must be for a special reason. It is because here there is a possib lity of *absorbing* consciousness and progress. If you do not put yourself i a state in which you receive it, you lose the chance that you are given.

What do you think about it? Is it mere chance or simply because you parents have put you here that you are here, you might as well have bee anywhere else? You should put these questions to yourselves. At thirtee one can begin questioning very well, especially if one finds himself at place which is not quite ordinary. Why one is here, for what reasons, wh is the purpose of being here?

If you had asked this, you should have gone and sought for the answ somewhere within you. For the answer is within you, nowhere outside. you go deep enough you will find an answer very clear, very interestin If you go deep down, into a silence where all external things are silence you will see there within a Flame of which I speak so often and within th Flame you will see your destiny. You will see the aspiration of centur that has accumulated little by little to lead you through countless births the great day of Realisation. This preparation has taken thousands of ye and it is now arriving at its fruition.

And when you have gone deep enough to find that, you will see a feel that all your incapacities, weaknesses, all that in you denies and d not understand, all that is not yourself; it is simply a robe which fits you t certain extent only and which you have put on for the occasion only.

But you must understand. If you wish to see yourself truly capable profiting by the opportunity, doing what you wanted to do, what you aspi to do long long ago, you must little by little turn to the Light, the Conscio ness, the Truth and bring them into these obscure elements of your exte

robe. It is only then that you will understand fully why you are here, not only understand but become capable of doing what you are here for.

Through centuries it has prepared itself in you, not naturally in this body, which is the most recent, but in your true being: for centuries it has been waiting for this occasion. You see how wonderful it all is! You see the things that one has hoped for since long long ago, for which one has prayed so much, laboured so much, find now the hour when they are being realised. It is the hour when great things are being done. One must not miss the occasion.

4-8-1954

For 'tis with mouth of clay I supplicate:
Speak to me heart to heart words intimate,
And all Thy formless glory turn to love
And mould Thy love into a human face.

AMAL

KHALED OF THE SEA

An Arabian Romance

CANTO I

THE STORY OF ALMAIMUN AND THE EMIR'S DAUGHTER

NOW in great Bagdad of the Abbasside
The wanderer rests, to peace at last allied,
Whom storm so long had tossed to storm, and grace
Of love dwelt with him and the nobleness
Of hearts made golden by felicity,
Which is earth's preferable alchemy.
The other is from pain the metal wrought,
Anguish and wrestling in the coils of thought.
These strengthen, these the mind as marble hard
Make and as marble pure, which has not feared
To scourge itself with insight; but the stress
Of joy heightened to self-forgetfulness
Is sweeter and to sweeter uses tends.
With such felicity were crowned the friends
And lovers of Almaimun and increase
In the glad strength that grows from boundless peace.
And each as to her orb the sunflower burns
His spirit to his spirit's image turns.
Such puissance great well-poised natures prove
To mould to their own likeness all they love.
But where is she who lit his doubtful morn,
Whose sweet imagined shape each hour new-born
Brightened but to illumine, kindled each
Stray look with godhead and her daily speech
A far ethereal music made, for whom

He sought the wild waves and the peopled gloom
Of the unseen? Must only she make moan?
She in the crowded chambers is alone
And closes eyes kept dry by anguished pride
To wake in tears that hardly will be dried.
Happy the heart and more than earthly blest
That for those hands was meant where 'tis possessed
That to no alien house at the end has come
But winging goes as to its natural home.
The evening bird with no more simple flight
Reaches its one unfailing nest at night.
The heart which Fate not always here perverse
With the one possible home out of an universe,
Makes simply happy there secure shall dwell,
Feeling that to be there is only well
And equal happy whether queenly chair
Her portion or she kneel loose-girdled there
And serve him as a slave. Alike 'tis heaven,
Rule or obedience to the one heart given.
So did not bright Zuleikha deem when she
The temple was of his idolatry.
Impatient of divine subjection, all
Love's wealth was to her grace imperial
Purple and diadems and earth's noblest gift
But vantage her disdainful pride to lift.
She was an Emir's daughter and her sire
Clothed her in jewels and sublime attire,
From silver dishes fed and emerald
And in a world of delicate air installed
So that her nature with these costly things
Being burdened raised in vain its heavenward wings.
From Koraish and the Abbasside he drew
His stern extraction. Yet what brighter grew
About his formidable name accursed
Was a white fire of riches and the thirst
Of poor men gazing with a bitter stealth
On that impossibility of wealth.
"Abdullah, the Emir", so men would say

Drawing their rags about them, "has display
Of gold and silver and the sunlight fades
At noon in his wide treasury and the shades
Of midnight are more luminous there than birth
Of day upon the ordinary earth.
He has rich garments, would the naked clothe
From Bagdad to the sea, were he not loth;
The leavings of his menials far exceed
In Khorassan the labourer's sharpened need,
And since by thee this fair display was planned,
O God, yet from the beggar's outstretched hand
He guards his boundless trust ignobly well,
Just Lord, display to him the fires of Hell."
And here another pressing from his eye
His children's pining looks, made sad reply.
"Richer his wealth than widest chambers hold,
Not in the weary heaps of ingots told
Entirely, nor the cloths Damascus yields,
Nor what the seas give up, nor what the fields.
He gathers ever with exhaustless hands:
His camels heave across the endless sands.
Through Balkh when to Caboul or Candahar
The wains go groaning or the evening star
Watches the pomp of the wide caravan
Intend to provinces Arabian,
Half is Abdullah the Emir's: and he
Gets spices of the south and porphyry:
His are the Chinese silks, the Indian work
Saved hardly from the horsehooves of the Turk:
From Bassora the ships that o'er the bar
Reel into Ocean's grasp, Abdullah's are;
Yemen's far ports are with his ventures full;
Muscat transmits him horses, arms and wool.
The desert rider hopes no richer prize
To handle than Abdullah's merchandize;
With joy the Malayan sea-robber hails
His argosy and for his western sails
The Moorish pirates all the horizon scan

Upon the far Mediterranean.
Yet though his losses make the desert great
And Ocean a new treasury create
From his sole rapine, yet untouched endure
His riches by that vast expenditure.
He takes but to increase his piles of gold,
He gives but to recover hundredfold.
Thereby the poor increase. Wherefore I trust,
When Azrael shall smite his limbs to dust
And he upon that dolorous bridge is led
Which, lord and peasant, all must one day tread,
The bitter sword that spans the nether hell,
He may be evened with the infidel."
And one might answer mid these wretched men
Who quiet was from constancy to pain;
"Curse him not either lest the Kazi find
And God loose not the chains that he shall bind."
For he indeed was mighty in the town,
The Mullahs to his will interpreted
Their books and the laws lightning from his head
Glanced on the rash accuser; for his word
Was Hedaya before the Kazi heard.
But whence the fountain of his wealth might flow
Well did the sad and toiling peasant know.
For he as governor in Khorassan
Had held the balance betwixt man and man
And justified his rule benevolent
By rape and torture for their own good meant,
The fallen roof tree and the broken door
And rents wrung from the miserable poor.
And now hemmed in with lustrous things and proud,
Each day a pomp, each night with music loud,
He blazed, however his eye a darkness cast
And pleasure by his sense external passed.
Yet joy he had over his gathered gold
And in that one sweet maiden joy untold.
Daughter of Noureddin the Barmacide
Was she who bore this brightness, but when died

Jaafar and all his house fell like a tower
Loosened in the mutation of an hour,
Abdullah found his foe an outlawed man,
Proscribed, a heretic and Persian
And slew him with the sword juridical
Between his golden house and Allah's wall.

(Incomplete)

SRI AUROBINDO

THE FEET OF THE DIVINE MOTHER

O to besom a path for the Mother
To a welcoming-place apart,-
Road running, meant for no other,
Straight to the heart.

Be Her light footfall a token
Of a Stillness fraught with Grace;
Keep the truthward prayer unspoken
Her sandals trace.

Not solely Heaven descended
But earth upflowers to God
Eachwhere Her heaven-attended
Silence trod.

ARJAVA

SRI AUROBINDO AND THE UPANISHADS

TAITTIRIYA UPANISHAD

II

THE Brahmananda Valli commences with a solemn prayer to the Divine laying emphasis on the joint nature of the endeavour upon which the Teacher and the disciple are to presently embark. Between the Teacher who gives the knowledge and the seeker who receives it, there should be a complete harmony of understanding, an identity of seeking, even a union of being for the study to be fully fruitful in its result. Only thus can it be ensured that there is no diminution of the light and power, of the knowledge imparted, no misprision in the course of the communication. No disharmony of any kind shall depress the even course of their communion. With this purpose the prayer is hymned:

Hari OM. Together may he protect us, together may He possess us, together may we make unto us strength and virility. May our study be full to us of light and power. May we never hate. OM! Peace! Peace! Peace![1]

The text straightway plunges into the very heart of the subject.

The knower of Brahman, it declares, *reaches that which is supreme.*[2] And in anticipation of the natural query, 'But what is Brahman?' it proceeds to answer in the words of the more ancient seers:

Brahman is Truth, Brahman is Knowledge, Brahman is the Infinite.[3] Brahman is That which exists fundamentally, the Sole Truth from which all

[1] हरि ॐ। सह नाववतु। सह वीर्यं करवावहै। तेजस्विनावधीतमस्तु। मा विद्विषावहै। ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः॥

[2] ब्रह्मविदाप्नोति परम्।

[3] सत्यं ज्ञानमनन्तं ब्रह्म।

existences derive their ultimate significance. "Whatever reality is in existence by which all the rest subsists, that is Brahman. An Eternal behind all instabilities, a Truth of things which is implied, if it is hidden in all appearances, a Constant which supports all mutations, but is not increased, diminished, abnegated", that is Brahman. But not that alone. Brahman is not merely the substratum of Truth that underlies all existence. It is also Knowledge, the Truth-awareness, the Consciousness that is inherent in the Truth-Being, and is spontaneously in possession of the truth of all things—absolute and supreme Knowledge. It is Knowledge One with its content, and its content embraces All since there is nothing outside this Self-aware Existence. And It is the Infinite. Brahman is *ananta*,[1] endless. Its endlessness includes, as Sri Aurobindo points out, all kinds of infinity. It is limited neither by Time nor Space both of which are only terms of Its manifestation. And more. "For by the Infinite we do not mean solely an illimitable self-extension in Space and Time, but something that is also spaceless and timeless, a self-existent Indefinable and Illimitable which can express itself in the infinitesimal as well as the vast, in a second of time, in a point of space, in a passing circumstance." It is not bound or limited, either, by the laws of Causality to which all phenomena are subject; there is absolute Freedom in the Immutability of Brahman.

This is the Brahman, the Eternal, to be *known*. Where is He to be found and known? He is not patent to the human eye amidst the myriad forms of the physical universe which crowd upon it. He is to be sought behind the veil of forms and the search must proceed and be pursued from the

[1] It was not necessary for the German scholar Deussen to suggest that *ananta* may be an error handed down the generations and that the original word must have been *ānanda*—an idea which evidently occured to him by the conception and repeated mention of *sat-cit-ānanda* in Vedantic literature. It is not a mistake. On the other hand there is a significance in the use of the term *ananta*. *Ananta* is the condition, *ānanda* is the consequence For without *ananta*, endlessness, absence of limitation, no real *ānanda* is possible—*bhūmaiva sukham*, Immensity that is Felicity (Chhandogya Up. VII. 23). "All illimitableness, all infinity, all absoluteness is pure delight. Absoluteness of conscious existence is illimitable bliss of conscious existence; the two are only different phrases for the same thing. All illi mitableness, all absoluteness is pure delight. Even our relative humanity has this experience that all dissatisfaction means a limit, an obstacle,—satisfaction comes by realisation of something withheld, by the surpassing of the limit, the overcoming of the obstacle. This is because our original being is the absolute in full possession of its infinite and illimitable self-consciousness and self-power; a self-possession whose other name is self-delight. And in proportion as the relative touches upon that self-possession, it moves towards satisfaction, touches delight." (Sri Aurobindo)

more dense to the less dense layers of existence, from the less dense to the subtle and yet more subtle regions until one arrives at the sheer core of things where *hidden in the secrecy in the supreme ether*[1] Brahman awaits to be cognised and realised.[2] This is the "hidden head of the Infinite and the secret heart of the Eternal. It is the highest and this highest is the all; there is none beyond and there is none other than it. To know it is to know the highest and by knowing the highest to know all. For as it is the beginning and source of all things, so everything else is its consequence; as it is the support and constituent of all things, so the secret of everything else is explained by its secret; as it is the sum and end of all things, so everything else amounts to it and by throwing itself into it achieves the sense of its own existence.

This is the Brahman." (Sri Aurobindo)

And it is possible to *know* this Eternal Brahman. The Reality determines itself, defines and reveals itself in certain Truths of its Being seizable by our consciousness and thus renders itself to be known. And Knowledge of Brahman is knowledge with a consequence. To know Brahman, the Upanishad has declared, is to attain to the highest. He who knows Brahman, it continues:

Enjoyeth all desires along with the wise-thinking Brahman.[3]

In the words of Sri Aurobindo: "The knowledge of the Brahman is not a thing luminous but otiose, informing to the intellectual view of things but without consequence to the soul of the individual or his living; it is a knowledge that is a power and divine compulsion to change; by it his existence gains something that now he does not possess in consciousness. What is this gain? it is this that he is conscious now in a lower state only of his being, but by knowledge he gains his highest being.

The highest state of our being is not a denial, contradiction and annihilation of all that we now are; it is a supreme accomplishment of all things

[1] निहितं गुहायां परमे व्योमन्।

[2] O human copy and disguise of God
Who seekest the deity thou keepest hid
And livest by the Truth thou hast not known,
Follow the world's winding highway to its source.
There in the silence few have ever reached,
Thou shalt see the Fire burning on the bare stone
And the deep cavern of thy secret soul.
(*Savitri* Book VII, Canto 3)

[3] यो वेद... सोऽश्नुते सर्वान् कामान् सह ब्रह्मणा विपश्चितेति।

that our present existence means and aims at, but in their highest sense and in the eternal values."

"The true knowledge is that of the highest, the inmost, the infinite. The knower of the Brahman sees all these lower things in the light of the Highest, the external and superficial as a translation of the internal and essential, the finite from the view of the Infinite. He begins to see and know existence no longer as the thinking animal, but as the Eternal sees and knows it. Therefore he is glad and rich in being, luminous in joy, satisfied of existence."

"Knowledge does not end with knowing, nor is it pursued and found for the sake of knowing alone. It has its full value only when it leads to some greater gain than itself, some gain of being. Simply to know the eternal and to remain in the pain, struggle and inferiority of our present way of being, would be a poor and lame advantage.

A greater knowledge opens the possibility and, if really possessed, brings the actuality of a greater being. To be is the first verb which contains all the others; knowledge, action, creation, enjoyment are only a fulfilment of being. Since we are incomplete in being, to grow is our aim, and that knowledge, action, creation, enjoyment are the best which most help us to expand, grow, feel our existence.

Mere existence is not fullness of being. Being knows itself as power, consciousness, delight; a greater being means a greater power, consciousness and delight. If by greater being we incurred only a greater pain and suffering, this good would not be worth having. Those who say that it is, mean simply that we get by it a greater sense of fulfilment which brings of itself a greater joy of the power of existence, and an extension of suffering or a loss of other enjoyment is worth having as a price for this greater sense of wideness, height and power. But this could not be the perfection of being or the highest height of its fulfilment; suffering is the seal of a lower status. The highest consciousness is integrally fulfilled in wideness and power of its existence, but also it is integrally fulfilled in delight.

The knower of Brahman has not only the joy of light, but gains something immense as the result of his knowledge, *brahmavid āpnoti.*

What he gains is that highest, that which is supreme; he gains the highest being, the highest consciousness, the highest wideness and power of being, the highest delight; *brahmavid āpnoti param.*"

"The Supreme is not something aloof and shut up in itself. It is not a mere indefinable, prisoner of its own featureless absoluteness, impotent to

define, create, know itself variously, eternally buried in a sleep or a swoon of self-absorption. The Highest is the Infinite and the Infinite contains the All. Whoever attains the highest consciousness, becomes infinite in being and embraces the all.

To make this clear the Upanishad has defined the Brahman as the Truth, Knowledge, Infinity and has defined the result of the knowledge of Him in the secrecy, in the cave of being, in the supreme ether as the enjoyment of all its desires by the soul of the individual in the attainment of its highest self-existence.

Our highest state of being is indeed a becoming one with Brahman in his eternity and infinity, but it is also an association with him in delight of self-fulfilment, *aśnute saha brahmaṇā*. And that principle of the Eternal by which this association is possible, is the principle of his knowledge, his self-discernment and all-discernment, the wisdom by which he knows himself perfectly in all the world and all beings, *brahmaṇā vipaścitā*.

Delight of being is the continent of all the fulfilled values of existence which we now seek after in the forms of desire. To know its conditions and possess it purely and perfectly is the infinite privilege of the eternal Wisdom."

This Supreme Reality is no absolute self-Being that exists only in transcendence of the universe. Brahman is not the Beyond alone. It is here, says the Upanishad, the Self of all existence and around this Self is the whole creation centred. Brahman is Atman—the Self. From the Brahman-Atman have issued all the existences in this Creation.

This is the Self, the Spirit, and from the Spirit ether was born; and from the ether, air; and from the air fire and from the fire, the waters; and from the waters, earth.[1]

From the most subtle to the utmost gross state of existence all are the modifications of this Self. The Manifestation of Brahman proceeds through an extension in graded self-modifications of its Being. Describing this process in regard to the creation of the physical universe, as viewed by the old Indian seers, Sri Aurobindo writes:

"The elementary state...is a condition of pure material extension in

[1] II. 1.

Space of which the peculiar property is vibration typified to us by the phenomenon of sound. But vibration in this state of ether is not sufficient to create forms. There must first be some obstruction in the flow of the Force Ocean, some contraction and expansion, some interplay of vibrations, some impinging of force upon force so as to create a beginning of fixed relations and mutual effects. Material Force modifying its first ethereal status assumes a second, called in the old language the aerial, of which the special property is contact between force and force, contact that is the basis of all material relations. Still we have not as yet real forms but only varying forces. A sustaining principle is needed. This is provided by a third self-modification of the primitive Force of which the principle of light, electricity, fire and heat is for us the characteristic manifestation. Even then, we can have forms of force preserving their own character and peculiar action, but not stable forms of Matter. A fourth state characterised by diffusion and a first medium of permanent attractions and repulsions, termed picturesquely water or the liquid state, a fifth of cohesion, termed earth or the solidstate, complete the necessary elements."[1]

And from Earth, physical matter, issue the rest:

[1]*Life Divine* Vol. I Chap. X.

Vide also *Savitri* (Book II, Canto V):

At first was only an etheric Space:
Its huge vibrations circled round and round
Housing some unconceived initiative:
Upheld by a supreme original Breath
Expansion and contraction's mystic act
Created touch and friction in the void,
Into abstract emptiness brought clash and clasp:
Parent of an expanding universe
In a matrix of disintegrating force,
By spending it conserved an endless sum.
On the hearth of Space it kindled a viewless Fire
That, scattering worlds as one might scatter seeds,
Whirled out the luminous order of the stars.
An ocean of electric Energy
Formlessly formed its strange wave-particles
Constructing by their dance this solid scheme,
Its mightiness in the atom shut to rest;
Masses were forged or feigned and visible shapes;
Light flung the photon's swift revealing spark
And showed, in the minuteness of its flash
Imaged, this cosmos of apparent things.

From the earth, herbs and plants; and from the herbs and plants food; and from food man was born.

Even man, the highest evolved creature that walks the earth, is a product of the physical substance of matter, what the text calls Food.

Verily, man, this human being, is made of the essential substance of food.

Man comes into being with the birth of his body which is constituted of the essence and the modifications of Matter and he dies with the disintegration of that body of matter. Whatever the other principles active in him like mind, life etc. they depend for their existence and functioning on the physical body and are, normally, wholly conditioned by it. Whichever way one looks at this human being in creation, horizontally or vertically, he is an evolute of Matter—Food. "Here in the material world everything is founded upon the formula of material substance. Sense, Life, Thought found themselves upon what the ancients called the Earth-Power, start from it, obey its laws, accommodate their workings to this fundamental principle, limit themselves by its possibilities and, if they would develop others, have even in that development to take account of the original formula, its purpose and its demand upon the divine evolution. The sense works through physical instruments, the life through a physical nerve-system and vital organs, the mind has to build its operations upon a corporeal basis and use a material instrumentation, even its pure mental workings have to take the data so derived as a field and as the stuff upon which it works." (Sri Auroindo)[1]

Not only man but all creatures upon earth—we do not speak at the moment of worlds or planes other than earth where things can well be and are organised on a different basis—are visibly products issued out of Matter.

Food is the eldest of created things and therefore they name it the Green Stuff of the universe.

They come into being from Matter; they keep themselves in existence and increase by taking in more and more of the essence of Matter. And in the process of this 'eating' there comes an invasion; in the very process of the increasing there is a subtle decrease: something of the eater is automatically absorbed by the universal Matter through the portion that has

[1] *The Life Divine* Vol. I, Chap. XXVI.

entered into him. And when they thus decline and cease they dissolve again into the vast sea of Matter:[1]

Verily, all sorts and races of creatures that have their refuge upon earth, are begotten from food; thereafter they live also by food and it is to food again that they return at the end and last...

From food all creatures are born and being born they grow[2] *by food. Lo, it is eaten and it eats; yea, it devours the creatures that feed upon it, therefore it is called food from the eating.*

Matter is the one reality that strikes the eye and the seeker, says the Upanishad, must look upon this Matter as Brahman itself; Brahman has taken the form of Matter. "Brahman is not only the cause and supporting power and indwelling principle of the universe, he is also its material and its sole material. Matter also is Brahman and it is nothing other than or different from Brahman. If indeed Matter were cut off from Spirit, this would not be so; but it is...only a final form and objective aspect of the divine existence with all of God ever-present in it and behind it." (Sri Aurobindo).[3]

[1] *Vide*

Matter on the firm earth sits strong and sure.
It is the first-born of created things,
It stands the last when mind and life are slain,
And if it ended all would cease to be.
All else is only its outcome or its phase:
Thy soul is a brief flower by the gardener Mind
Created on thy Matter's terrain plot;
It perishes with the plant on which it grows,
For from earth's sap it draws its heavenly hue:
Thy thoughts are gleams that pass on Matter's verge,
Thy life a lapsing wave on Matter's sea.
A careful steward of Truth's limited means,
Treasuring her founded facts from the squandering Power,
It tethers mind to the tent-posts of sense,
To a leaden grey routine clamps Life's caprice
And ties all creatures with the cords of Law.
A vessel of transmuting alchemies,
A glue that sticks together mind and life,
If Matter fails, all crumbling cracks and falls.
All upon Matter stands as on a rock.

(*Savitri* Book X, Canto II)

[2] or, 'increase'

[3] *The Life Divine.*

And one who realises this truth of Brahman as Matter necessarily arrives at the secret of this material manifestation of the Spirit.

Verily, they who worship the Eternal as food, attain the mastery of food to the uttermost.

Now the Brahman-Being or Self which is related to and presides over this manifestation of the Physical principle in the Reality—*Annam* of the Upanishads—is called the Annamaya Purusha. "Poised in the principle of Matter it (Spirit, Self or Being) becomes the physical self of a physical universe in the reign of a physical Nature; Spirit is then absorbed in its experience of Matter; it is dominated by the ignorance and inertia of the tamasic Power proper to physical existence. In the individual it becomes a materialised soul, *annamaya puruṣa*, whose life and mind have developed out of the ignorance and inertia of the material principle and are subject to their fundamental limitations. For life in matter works in dependence on the body; mind in Matter works in dependence on the body and on the vital or nervous being; spirit itself in Matter is limited and divided in its self-relation and its powers by the limitations and divisions of this matter-governed and life-driven mind. This materialised soul lives bound to the physical body and its narrow superficial external consciousness, and it takes normally the experiences of its physical organs, its senses, its matter-bound life and mind, with at most some limited spiritual glimpses as the whole truth of existence." (Sri Aurobindo)[1]

This, however, is not the whole truth of the matter.

Physical substance, Matter, provides indeed the base, the hard rock of existence. But it needs something else to vivify it, to enliven it. And that is done by Prana, the Life-force. Without this life-element in it, Matter is dead matter. Enlivening the physical form of all entities in the universe there flows a life-energy, 'a constant act or play of the Force which builds up forms, energises them by a continual stream of stimulation and maintains them by an unceasing process of disintegration and renewal of their substance.'[2] It envelops, it enters and constitutes the life-stuff of All:

The Gods live and breathe under the dominion of Prana and men and all these that are beasts; for Prana is the life of created things and therefore they name it the Life-Stuff of the All.[3]

[1] *On Yoga* p. 531.

[2] *The Life Divine* (Vol. I. Chap. XIX)

[3] II. 3.

"...there is one all-pervading Life or dynamic energy—the material aspect being only its outermost movement—that creates all these forms of the physical universe, Life imperishable and eternal which, even if the whole figure of the universe were quite abolished, would itself still go on existing and be capable of producing a new universe in its place, must indeed, unless it be held back in a state of rest by some higher Power or hold itself back, inevitably go on creating. In that case Life is nothing else than the Force that builds and maintains and destroys forms in the world; it is Life that manifests itself in the form of the earth as much as in the plant that grows upon the earth and the animals that support their existence by devouring the life-force of the plant or of each other. All existence here is a universal Life that takes form of Matter." (Sri Aurobindo)[1]

Even as on the physical plane man has a physical Nature governed by the physical *puruṣa*, soul, so also on this life level, there is a life-soul governing his life-Nature. Brahman or Atman stations himself as the *prāṇamaya puruṣa* supporting and filling from within the outer *annamaya puruṣa*.

Now there is a second and inner Self which is other than this that is of the substance of food; and it is made of the vital stuff called Prana. And the Self of Prana fills the Self of food...

And this Self of Prana is the soul in the body of the former one which was of food.[2]

Of this Pranamaya Purusha the Upanishad says that *Prana* 'the breath of life which brings the universal life-force into the physical system and gives it there to be distributed', and *Vyāna* 'the breath of death which gives away the vital force out of the body' are the twin sides; earth, physical matter, is its base and foundation; and ether is the very soul of its being, *ākāśa ātmā*.

To quote Sri Aurobindo on the subject:

"...the spirit can be poised in the principle of Life, not in Matter. The Spirit so founded becomes the vital self of a vital world, the Life-soul of a Life-energy in the reign of a consciously dynamic Nature. Absorbed in the experiences of the power and play of a conscious Life, it is dominated by the

[1] *The Life Divine* Vol. I., Chap. XIX

[2] II. 2.

desire, activity and passion of the rajasic principle proper to vital existence. In the individual this spirit becomes a vital soul, *prāṇamaya puruṣa*, in whose nature the life-energies tyrannise over the mental and physical principle. The physical element in a vital world readily shapes its activities and formations in response to desire and its imaginations, it serves and obeys the passion and power of life and their formations and does not thwart or limit them as it does here on earth where life is a precarious incident in inanimate Matter. The mental element too is moulded and limited by the life-power, obeys it and helps only to enrich and fulfil the urge of its desires and the energy of its impulses. This vital soul lives in a vital body composed of a substance much subtler than physical matter, it is a substance surcharged with conscious energy, capable of much more powerful perceptions, capacities, sense-activities than any that the gross atomic elements of earth-matter can offer. Man, too, has in himself behind his physical being, subliminal to it, unseen and unknown but very close to it and forming with it the most naturally active part of his existence, this vital soul, this vital nature and this vital body; a whole vital plane connected with the life-world or desire-world is hidden in us, a secret consciousness in which life and desire find their untrammelled play and their easy self-expression and from there throw their influences and formations on our outer life."[1]

And this too is Brahman. Prana is to be experienced and realised as Brahman itself, as a manifestation of Brahman as Power, for its fullest potency to be dynamised in oneself.

Verily, they who worship the Eternal as Prana, reach[2] *Life to the uttermost.*[3]

Prana, the life-force which vitalises the physical body does not, however, operate all by itself. It is not a blind, mechanically active Force. It is informed, guided and led by the operation of a Principle of Consciousness. Wherever there is life, there is behind it an operating consciousness which in its awakened form is termed Mind, *manas*. And the Atman as the Self of this Mind-plane of existence is called the *manomaya purusa*. This Mind-being is the leader of the life and body, *prāṇa śarīra netā*, as another Upanishad puts it.

Now there is yet a second and inner Self which is other than this that is of Prana, and it is made of Mind. And the Self of Mind fills the Self of

[1] *On Yoga* p. 533-34
[2] Or, 'attain mastery of'
[3] II.3.

Prana....And this Self of Mind is the soul in the body to the former one which was of Prana.[1]

This Purusha of the Mind, says the Upanishad, is constituted of the stuff of the Eternal Word in expression in Creation—*Veda-ātman* (Shankara). The Word of Illumination and the Word of Harmonies are its twin sides and the Word of Execution is its head. The *vidhi*, an imperative Directive to ever sacrifice and progress is its centre and a settled, fixed flame of Aspiration is its urging base.

"Above matter and life stands the principle of mind, nearer to the secret Origin of things. The Spirit poised in mind becomes the mental self of a mental world and dwells there in the reign of its own pure and luminous mental Nature. There it acts in the intense freedom of the cosmic Intelligence supported by the combined workings of a psycho-mental and a higher emotional mind-force, subtilised and enlightened by the clarity and happiness of the sattwic principle proper to the mental existence. In the individual the spirit so poised becomes a mental soul, *manomaya puruṣa*, in whose nature the clarity and luminous power of the mind acts in its own right independent of any limitation or oppression by the vital or corporeal instruments; it rather rules and determines entirely the forms of its body and the powers of its life. For mind in its own plane is not limited by life and obstructed by matter as it is here in the earth-process. This mental soul lives in a mental or subtle body which enjoys capacities of knowledge, perception, sympathy and interpenetration with other beings hardly imaginable by us and a free, delicate and extensive mentalised sense-faculty not limited by the grosser conditions of the life-nature or the physical nature.

Man too has in himself, subliminal, unknown and unseen concealed behind his waking consciousness and visible organism this mental soul, mental nature, mental body and a mental plane, not materialised, in which the principle of Mind is at home and not as here at strife with a world which is alien to it, obstructive to its freedom and corruptive of its purity and clearness. All the higher faculties of man, his intellectual and psychological being and powers, his higher emotional life awaken and increase in proportion as this mental plane in him presses upon him. For the more it manifests, the more it influences the physical parts, the more it enriches and elevates the

[1] II. 3.4.

corresponding mental plane of the embodied nature. At a certain pitch of its increasing sovereignty it can make man truly man and not merely a reasoning animal; for it gives then its characteristic force to the mental being within us which our humanity is in the inwardly governing but still too hampered essence of its psychological structure.

It is possible for man to awaken to this higher mental consciousness, to become this mental being, put on this mental nature and live not only in the vital and physical sheaths, but in this mental body." (Sri Aurobindo)[1]

The Mental Self is not the last word either. For in the very nature of things Mind is imperfect, incomplete and patently too limited in its field and power to be the ultimate Purusha of the manifestation, individual or universal. Mind is dependent. It cannot know or act by itself. It depends upon the senses and other faculties for its function. And what knowledge it thus acquires or forms is naturally circumscribed by the limitations of those instrumental agencies. That apart, by its own constitution, the human mind proceeds by a separative, analytic process of thought and can hence arrive at only partial truth of things. It is only a greater Faculty with a larger and other sweep of Vision and Power that can possess the Knowledge and the Secret of the Manifestation. And there is, says the Upanishad, such an active Priciple, *Vijñāna* and the Supreme Being expressing and governing it is the *Vijñānamaya Puruṣa.*

Now there is yet a second and inner self which is other than this which is of Mind and it is made of Knowledge. And the Self of Knowledge fills the Self of Mind...And this Self of Knowledge is the soul in the body to the former which was of Mind.[2]

It is to be noted that the word *vijñāna* in the Upanishads does not signify what it has come to mean in the later day literature—*buddhi* or intellect. For the faculty of Intellect is included in the Mind of the Upanishadic conception. The Vijnana is the term for a yet higher principle in the cosmic manifestation; not even mind at its highest, it is above Mind. This is what is called the Mahas in the ancient literature and the Supermind by Sri Aurobindo. The Mind is only a derivation of the Vijnana which is a

[1] *On Yoga* p. 536.
[2] II. 4, 5.

principle of Truth-Knowledge. "Vijanana, the principle of the world of Mahas, is neither the intellect, *buddhi*, nor knowledge of the intellectual kind, the mind. It is Knowledge indeed, but Knowledge proper to a higher grade of the Spirit's Being in its Self-extension in the supernal altitudes of Self-projection, a Knowledge immense with Power, or it is something that is at once Knowledge and Power or Knowledge that is Power. This is the Purusha, Vijnanamaya, the Supramental Person." (Sri Kapali Sastry)[1]

And the Mental Self, the *manomaya puruṣa*, is filled in and supported by this Self of Knowledge. Of this Self, the Upanishad says in a shining image, Satya, Truth of Being, is one side and Rita, Truth of Action, the other; Faith, an invincible Truth-certitude[2] is the head and the Mahas, the Vast Light, its base. Yoga, union, a constant and spontaneous union with the heart of things is the spirit of its being. This is the *vijñānamaya puruṣa* which the Upanishad goes on to describe as He whose Knowledge-Power renders all activity, all sacrifice most widely effective and to whom

All the gods offer adoration to him as to Brahman and the Elder of the Universe. For if one worship Brahman as the knowledge and if one swerve not

[1] *Lights on the Fundamentals* p. 48.

Vide also:

"One error of intellect-bounded thinkers takes *vijñāna* as synonymous with the other Indian term *buddhi* and the *buddhi* as synonymous with the reason, the discerning intellect, the logical intelligence. The systems that accept this significance, pass at once from a plane of pure intellect to a plane of pure spirit. No intermediate power is recognised, no diviner action of knowledge than the pure reason is admitted; the limited human means for facing truth is taken for the highest possible dynamics of consciousness, its topmost force and original movement. An opposite error, a misconception of the mystics identifies *vijñāna* with the consciousness of the Infinite free from all ideation or else ideation packed into one essence of thought, lost to other dynamic action in the single and invariable idea of the One. This is the *caitanyaghana* of the Upanishad and is one movement or rather one thread of the many-aspected movement of the gnosis. The gnosis, the Vijnana is not only this concentrated consciousness of the infinite Essence; it is also and at the same time an infinite knowledge of the myriad play of the Infinite. It contains all ideation (not mental but supramental), but it is not limited by ideation, for it far exceeds all ideative movement. Nor is the gnostic ideation in its character an intellectual thinking; it is not what we call the reason, not a concentrated intelligence. For the reason is mental in its methods, mental in its acquisitions, mental in its basis, but the ideative method of the gnosis is self-luminous, supramental, its yield of thought-light spontaneous, not proceeding by acquisition, its thought-basis a rendering of conscious identities, not a translation of the impressions born of indirect contacts."

Sri Aurobindo: *On Yoga* p. 544

[2] The Faith which the Vedic seers described as attainable by the yearnings of the heart: *śraddhām hṛdayyayā ākutyā vindate* and that which the Gods adore and draw upon. Rv.X.151.

from it neither falter, then he casts sin from him in body and tastes all desire.[1]

To realise the Truth of this Knowledge-Being, the Vijnanamaya Purusha, in oneself is to transcend out of the limitations and falsehood of the mortal nature in Ignorance. In the words of Sri Aurobindo:

"In our perfect self-transcendence we pass out and up from the ignorance or half-enlightenment of our mental conscious-being into a greater wisdom-self and truth-power above it, there to dwell in the unwalled light of a divine knowledge. The mental man that we are is changed into the gnostic soul, the truth-conscious godhead, the *vijñānamaya puruṣa*. Seated on that level of the hill of our ascension we are in a quite different plane from this material, this vital, this mental poise of the universal spirit, and with this change changes too all our view and experience of our soul-life and of the world around us. We are born into a new soul-status and put on a new nature; for according to the status of the soul is the status of the Prakriti. At each transition of the world-ascent, from matter to life, from life to mind, from mind bound to free intelligence, as the latent, half-manifested or already manifest soul rises to a higher and higher level of being, the nature also is elevated into a superior working, a wider consciousness, a vaster force and an intenser or larger range and joy of existence. But the transition from the mind-self to the knowledge-self is the great and the decisive transition in the Yoga. It is the shaking off of the last hold on us of the cosmic ignorance and our firm foundation in the Truth of things, in a consciousness infinite and eternal and inviolable by obscurity, falsehood, suffering or error."[2]

But even the self of Knowledge-Power is not the innermost self. There is behind it, says the Upanishad, yet another Self which constitutes the soul of the Vijnanamaya Purusha, in fact the ultimate core of all other Purushas, of all the tiers of manifestation.

Now there is yet a second and inner self which is other than this which is of Knowledge and it is fashioned out of Bliss. And the Self of Bliss fills the Self of Knowledge....And this Self of Bliss is the soul in the body to the former one which was of Knowledge.[3]

[1] II. 5
[2] *On Yoga* p. 542
[3] II. 5, 6

It is this Bliss or Anandamaya Purusha who makes possible the existence of all the other Purushas. Ananda, bliss, is the very nature of Brahman from whom all is derived; and it is from the fountain-spring of Ananda in its supreme ebullience that all creation is issued forth, motivated and maintained. The Self of Ananda is not supported by any other Self like the previous selves, but it is based, indeed arises directly out of Brahman of which it is the very nature. "Ananda, a supreme Bliss eternal, far other and higher in its character than the highest human joy or pleasure is the essential and original nature of the spirit. In Ananda our spirit will find its true self, in Ananda its essential consciousness, in Ananda the absolute power of its existence. The embodied soul's entry into this highest absolute, unlimited, unconditional bliss of the spirit is the infinite liberation and the infinite perfection." (Sri Aurobindo)[1]

Of this Self, a spontaneous Joy and Happiness are the twin sides; Love is its head, *priyameva śiraḥ*—Love the culmination of Delight. It is this self-existent Bliss which flows out and over others and envelops them as Love.[2] Brahman itself is its direct base and Ananda—the Supreme Bliss, is the core.

This is the well-known doctrine of the Five Koshas, the five sheaths of the five Purushas constituting the Personality in manifestation, individual and universal. These are the Five Persons, the Annamaya Purusha, Pranamaya Purusha, Manomaya Purusha, Vijnanamaya Purusha and Anandamaya Purusha, each ensouling the previous one, governing their respective *kṣetras*, fields of Matter, Life, Mind, Vijnana and Bliss, closely corresponding to the Five Peoples, *panca janāḥ* of the Five Earths, *panca kṣitīḥ* in the ancient Veda.

(*To be continued*)

M. P. PANDIT

[1] *On Yoga* p. 568

[2] *Vide:*

"The Vedic Seers looked at Love from above, from its source and root and saw it and received it in their humanity as an outflowing of the divine Delight. The Taittiriya Upanishad expounding the spiritual and cosmic bliss of the godhead, Vedantic Ananda, Vedic Mayas, says of it, 'Love is its head.' But the word it chooses for Love, *priyam*, means properly the delightfulness of the objects of the soul's inner pleasure and satisfaction. The Vedic singers used the same psychology. They couple *mayas* and *prayas*,—*mayas*, the principle of inner felicity independent of all objects, *prayas*, its outflowing as the delight and pleasure of the soul in objects and beings." (Sri Aurobindo: *On the Veda* p. 568)

THE GREAT MANIFESTATION*

Introduction

GOD is everywhere in everything, God is all and all is God, yet men deny His existence; they are too blind to see God even though He may be so near to them, seated in their very hearts. How can they accept Him as incarnated in one particular human being and human body? How can the Infinite be limited to a mortal body, the Eternal to a transitory life on earth? Yet that is the mystery of Avatarhood proclaimed in the ancient scriptures of India. The Lord in the Gita declares the truth of Avatarhood in these memorable words: "Whensoever there is the fading of the Dharma and the uprising of unrighteousness, then I loose myself forth into birth. For the deliverance of the good, for the destruction of the evil-doers, for the enthroning of the Right, I am born from age to age." (IV-7,8). In the *Markendeya Purana* the divine Mother declares: "Whenever the Asuras will create trouble, then will I incarnate myself and destroy the enemies." The Rishi says, "O king, though the divine Mother is eternal, she incarnates herself again and again in order to support and maintain the world."

"India" says Sri Aurobindo, "has from ancient times held strongly a belief in the reality of the Avatar, the descent into form, the revelation of the Godhead in humanity. In the West this belief has never really stamped itself upon the mind because it has been presented through exoteric Christianity as a theological dogma without any roots in the reason and general consciousness and attitude towards life. But in India it has grown up and persisted as a logical outcome of the Vedantic view of life and taken firm root in the consciousness of the race. All existence is a manifestation of God because He is the only existence and nothing can be except as either a real figuring or else a figment of that one reality. Therefore every conscious being is in part or in some way a descent of the Infinite into the

[1] Extracts from the author's forthcoming book, The Great Manifestation.

apparent finiteness of name and form. But it is a veiled manifestation and there is a gradation between the supreme being of the Divine and the consciousness shrouded partly or wholly by ignorance of self in the finite. The conscious embodied soul is the spark of the divine fire and that soul in man opens out to self-knowledge as it develops out of ignorance of self into self-being. The Divine also, pouring itself into the forms of cosmic existence, is revealed ordinarily in an efflorescence of its powers, in energies and magnitudes of its knowledge, love, joy, developed force of being, in degrees and faces of its divinity. But when the divine Consciousness and Power, taking upon itself the human form and the human mode of action, possesses it not only by powers and magnitudes, by degrees and outward faces of itself but out of its eternal self-knowledge, when the Unborn knows itself and acts in the frame of the mental being and the appearance of birth, that is the height of the conditioned manifestation; it is the full and conscious descent of the Godhead, it is the Avatar." (*Essays on the Gita Ch.* II)

INDIA—THE SACRED LAND

The progress that humanity has achieved through the discoveries of Science and the mastery over the forces of Nature is astonishing. The power that the scientists have been able to release from inside the atom has raised hopes that there will be nothing impossible for man on earth any longer; if this force be properly utilised, poverty and squalor will be banished for ever from the face of the earth, no one will have to do any work of drudgery, everybody irrespective of class, creed or race will be able to enjoy the earthly life, developing all their potentialities to the fullest extent and living a life of peace and prosperity. On the other hand, if the present mentality of men do not change radically, if they continue to pamper themselves by ruthlessly exploiting others and satisfying their inordinate desires, if they cannot curb their hankering for power and possession, then the human race will be surely destroyed through mutual conflict. It is high time humanity made the choice. It has been suggested that scientists should be prevented from pursuing their researches into the dangerous secrets of Nature. But that is neither possible nor desirable. The real remedy is to advance the inner life of man to keep pace with his outer progress, to change the mind and heart of man and transform them in such a manner that he will be able to utilise his newly acquired powers over the forces of Nature to

establish on earth the heavenly kingdom of unity, peace, love, beauty and bliss—and this fulfilment of the ancient dream of man, this supremely important change of his nature and consciousness can come only through spiritual practice and discipline. The Western world has begun to appreciate this all-important truth, but they are too much preoccupied with the external organisation of life to turn their attention adequately to the inner verities.

It is India who has to do this great work for humanity, for which she has prepared herself through ages. "India", says Will Durant, the eminent American thinker, "was the motherland of our race, and Sanskrit the mother of European languages; she was the Mother of our philosophy; mother, through the Arabs, of much of our Mathematics; mother, through Buddha, of the ideals embodied in Christianity; mother, through the village community, of self-government and democracy. Mother India is in many ways the mother of us all." "Once more the world must be conquered by India", says Swami Vivekananda, "Up, India, and conquer the world with your spirituality." That is also the only way of our own salvation, for it is the mission of India, the work for which she lives and grows, to bring spiritual illumination to the world. "There is no other way," says Swamiji, "we must do this or perish. The only way to build up the national life of India, a powerful and vigorous national life, is to conquer the world by India's spirituality." But the task is not at all easy, though Vivekananda himself made a good beginning. Under the influence of the scientific civilization of the West, men have become so much outward-minded, that it is difficult for them even to conceive of such things as God, Soul, Immortality, unmixed Bliss, universal Love. And this sceptic mentality has greatly influenced even the Indian mind, especially the mind of educated modern Indians. It is surprising how educated Indians swallow Marxist materialism, leaving aside Vedanta and the Gita. Thus an eminent Indian Scientist writes in a Bengali journal: "In our country those who are successful in life do not bother about religion; those who are failures become Vedantists, those who are avaricious and greedy become communalists. If we want progress, we must steer clear of religion which is poison of life. Sanction of religion is generally brought to sanctify that which is otherwise very bad and retard progress." That there is some truth in this charge, cannot be denied; like all other good things in life, religion has been abused and that has caused untold sufferings to mankind. But is not science and scientific knowledge being grossly misused for planning the destruction of the

race? Humanity has to change a lot before it can properly use its powers and opportunities for universal welfare, and that change can come only through spiritual discipline which is the essence of all true religion. At the same time it must be admitted that there has been a great deterioration in religion and religious practices: in many cases only the old forms are blindly followed while the spirit is lost. Viewed like this, religion is certainly standing in the way of progress, and sanction of religion is often sought to sanctify what is harmful to the individual and the race. The Gita recognises such periodical fading and decline of religion in the famous couplets where it indicates the occasion when God descends into a human form as Avatar. We are no doubt in such a crisis when a full descent of the Divine is called for, who would uphold the spiritual ideal in a new light necessary for the age and establish humanity on its true path. One thing that we have clearly to understand is that old ways, even in religion, are no longer sufficient for the present age, however great and useful they might have been in the past. "We do not belong to the past dawns, but to noons of the future", says Sri Aurobindo. And the new message that will meet the needs of the present crisis, we have to hear from the mouth of a high personality who would represent God in the human form and body, that is, the Avatar. Humanity is getting ready to hear and receive such a message, as it is emerging from the materialistic mentality of the recent past. This auspicious change in the outlook of mankind has been due chiefly to two causes. First, in spite of wonderful progress, Science has not been able to raise humanity out of its persistent suffering and misery, which seem to be on the increase in some directions. It is not a religious man "unsuccessful in life", but an eminent modern scientist who has made the following remarks: "At the moment we are beginning to emerge painfully from an age of materialistic philosophy that has been invaluable as the inspiration for applied Science, but has led to a neglect of other values, a neglect that is perhaps the ultimate cause of the present war (the second World War)." *The Structure of Morale* by J.T. Maccurdy.

Secondly, a great change has come in the outlook of Science itself. It no longer insists on sense evidence as the criterion of all truth. Thus Einstein observes: "The characteristics which especially distinguish the General theory of Relativity and even more the new third stage of the theory, the Unitary Field Theory, from other physical theories, are the degrees of formal speculation, the slender empirical basis, the boldness in theoretical construction, and finally the fundamental reliance on the uniformity of the

secrets of natural law and their accessibility to the speculative intellect." Thus Science is depending more and more on what Sri Aurobindo calls "Pure Reason" which has been so long the method of Philosophy in its support of spiritual truths. When we remember that it was the Relativity Theory of Einstein which ultimately led to the discovery of nuclear power, one can no longer dispute the claims of Philosophy and Spirituality to the deepest truths of Nature and the world, and it is only when human life is based on these truths that its intricate problems can be ultimately and satisfactorily solved. The latest advance of Science is rapidly diminishing the opposition between Matter and Spirit, and all scientists now agree that there is nothing in Science that contradicts spiritual truths, rather the existence of God and the divine governance of the world seem to be the most satisfactory explanation even of the material universe.

Thus the ground has been cleared for a new spiritual awakening which heralds the Advent and Progress of the Spiritual Age, the coming of which, says Sri Aurobindo, "must be preceded by the appearance of an increasing number of individuals who are no longer satisfied with the normal intellectual, vital and physical existence of man, but perceive that a greater evolution is the real goal of humanity and attempt to effect it in themselves, to lead others to it and to make it the recognised goal of the race."—*The Human Cycle*. By a deep analysis of the development of Society Sri Aurobindo has shown that it is not blind material forces but an all-seeing divine Providence that is leading the human race to its destiny of a glorious divine life on earth full of peace and light and love and beauty and immortal joy, and as Russia is experimenting with the materialistic interpretation of history, India has already started a great experiment in establishing and organising human life on a spiritual basis, and India, by all consent, is the country which is most fit for carrying on such an experiment with success giving a lead to the human race to its last divine fulfilment on the earth.

Many spiritual personalities have recently appeared in India to enable her to fulfil her divine mission in the world, and one of the most towering is undoubtedly Swami Vivekananda, whose words are always inspiring. In 1894 he declared in Chicago prophetically: "I have been travelling all over this country all this time and seeing everything. I have come to the conclusion that there is only one country in the world which understands religion —it is India: that with all their faults the Hindus are head and shoulders above all other nations in morality and spirituality and that with proper care and attempt and struggle of all her disinterested sons, by combining some

of the active and heroic elements of the West with the calm virtues of the Hindus, *there will come a type of men far superior to all that have ever been in the world.*" About the new awakening in India he said: "The longest night seems to be passing away, the sorest troubles seem to be coming to an end at last, the seeming corpse appears to be awakening and a voice is coming to us. Like a breeze from the Himalayas, it is bringing life into the almost dead bones and muscles, the lethargy is passing away, and only the blind cannot see, or the perverted will not see, that she is awakening, this motherland of ours, from her deep long sleep....None can resist her any more, no outward powers can hold her back any more, for the infinite giant is rising to her feet."

Vivekananda's works were more in the outer world for all to see, for only thus he could compel the world once more to listen to the voice of the ancient Mother. But his great Guru, Ramakrishna, had worked more in silence preparing the ground for his messenger. There have been other such silent spiritual workers, very little known to the world, who have yet prepared the ground for the manifestation of the Divine Mother in India and her work for the sublime transformation of the human race. In this book, we have undertaken to give a brief survey of the life and activities of such a great personality who was known as Shrimad Baba Bharat Brahmachari of East Bengal. He was not an educated man in the ordinary sense, like Vivekananda's Guru Ramakrishna, he also had never been to a school, but by earnest sadhana he had mastered the secrets of Veda and Vedanta and expressed them in homely language which can be understood by all. "The spiritual age will be ready to set in when the common mind of man begins to be alive to these truths," says Sri Aurobindo, and Sri Bharat Brahmachari was preeminently a teacher of the common mind. In him we find a great synthesis of all the spiritual paths that have hitherto been followed in India. He was a sannyasi of the old order passing his days under a tree, but he was not at all indifferent to society or country. He saw very clearly the urgent need of removing the falsehoods and superstitions that are passing for religion and spirituality and thus undermining the vitality of the race. It is by following his instructions, given as simple sutras, about the organisation of the life of the individual and the race that a new national life will grow up in India and she will again be able to conquer the world with her great spiritual heritage.

ANILBARAN ROY

STUDY OF TRADITIONAL CULTURE

In Communities in South India with Particular Reference to the Effects of Recent Industrial and Social Developments*

(A general psychological appraisal)

TRADITIONAL culture in South India or India or even South-east Asia in its essential motivation and the fundamental values of life has been practically the same. It has affirmed the existence of a reality higher than the empirical, both in human personality as well as the world. And the realisation of the same was the highest motive of life, individual as well as social. The character of this higher reality presented wide variations, but its nature was always spiritual and noumenal and not material-mental and phenomenal. This is true whether the pattern of life was Hindu—-and within the Hindu fold whether of Shaiva-Siddhanta or Advaita Vedanta or Vaishnavism or any other—or Buddhist or Islamic. In the Islamic pattern of culture there is relatively a much greater emphasis on the empirical, but the higher reality is clearly spiritual and the same is the last governing principle. The same is true of the Christian culture too. The contrast and divergence is not between the eastern Hindu, Buddhist or Islamic and the western Christian, but between the traditional religious cultures, of both East and West, and the modern scientific civilisation. With the affirmation of the scientific pursuit in the sixteenth century the European thinker declared his adherence to the empirical reality, the material nature, as the sole truth of existence. Reason, he affirmed, as the principal instrument of knowledge. Discovery of natural laws and their application in invention was the consequence and the system of life that has thus been built up is our present scientific civilisation. Its essential values are nature, reason, organisation, efficiency and better standards of living. The essential values of traditional religious culture were a higher spiritual reality in man and in universe, faith and intuition

* Contributed to the UNESCO Seminar at Madras.

and enjoyment of intrinsic values. With reference to the human personality in particular, one could say, that modern science and the concomitant civic and political living seek to encourage and develop the ego-type of selfhood —a selfhood that affirms a separative existence, an I that essentially distinguishes itself from the not-I, which it struggles against to conquer and dominate or submit to or make compromises with in self-expansion and self-preservation. The traditional religious cultures, on the other hand, have affirmed that the ego-selfhood is not the right selfhood and that a higher spiritual selfhood has to be realised. This selfhood is intimately related to the rest of existence, with which it spontaneously feels its unity and oneness. Evidently, the two types of selfhoods build around them distinctive systems of values. The former of separation, distinctiveness, self-assertion, acquisition, competition, anxiety and so on. The latter of self-consecration, oneness, harmoniousness, love and so on.

Now the industrial and the recent social developments do all affirm a system of values which militate against the principal values of the traditional religious cultures. In Europe, where these developments first came about, they did the same. There religion and science did not achieve a synthesis that was called for. Religion did not awaken to the need of accommodating science and made no creative efforts to achieve it. Science, on its side, was too strongly committed to its own premises and was not prepared to admit the need and necessity of a larger religious and philosophical orientation of life and existence. Religion was then in a traditional state and science in a vigorously creative form. Science naturally grew in influence and almost recreated the whole of life in its own image. Religion and science still await a conscious reconciliation and synthesis, though they are today not so hostile and indifferent to each other as they had become accustomed to be.

In Asian countries the same problem is being faced now. The alternatives before them are two. To accept science and technology and disregard and suppress the values of traditional culture and then await the consequences that have followed these in the West. Or learning from the experience of the West recognise the problem that science is a powerful new cultural force and that it should be consciously synthesised into the existing cultural pattern through a larger orientation of life. If the second alternative appeals to be the right one, then we will have no difficulty in recognising that the most important cultural problems that confront Asian countries today are:

1. Finding for science and technology a rightful place among the values of traditional culture. This will need accepting European science, but liberating it from its premises of materialism and providing for it new premises of a spiritual view of life from traditional culture. This is not difficult to do. Science, in reaction to religion, had affirmed nature as self-existent. Thus it stands divorced from spiritual reality and then it begins to compete with it. If nature, phenomenon that it is, is recognised as an aspect, a manifestation of the Spirit, then the whole orientation changes. Science then no longer competes with religion, but takes up a rightful place in the scheme of total life. Investigation of nature then becomes a pursuit of the Spirit.

2. Traditional culture too needs a reorientation. It must, in fact, cease to be 'traditional' and become conscious of itself and the tasks that life presents to it today. It must seek to recognise in itself, what is essential and what is non-essential, what is living and what is dead. And then it must sincerely weed out all that is sheer encumbrance and be prepared to incorporate new values that life, individual, national and international today demands and presents.

3. The process of change and growth in traditional culture should be carefully and intelligently guided. New industrial and social changes should not, so far as possible, be allowed to overrun existing life and cause superfluous disintegration.

If these problems are recognised and their solutions are intelligently pursued, then the Asian countries would most likely escape the consequences that have followed industrialisation in the West and what is most important they may achieve a cultural synthesis, which may prove useful for mankind as a whole.

So far we have considered just the issue presented by science, the problem it had presented to the West and the problem it presents to the Easy today. We might next consider what is the spirit of the industrial and new social developments and what is the essential effect produced by them upon the traditional societies of Asian countries. These developments are the workings and elaborations of the spirit of science and, therefore, largely represent the same cultural impulse. Industrialisation breaks up village communities and throws large numbers of men and women together, who have not been accustomed thus to live. The new social developments represent and embody mainly a cultural liberalism, democracy, humanism, secularism, rationalism and hedonism. Freer communication and travel

further aid these The net effect of all these forces is the break up of the older compact village community and the creation of a larger regional group, which is rather loose and incapable of effectively guiding and controlling the individual in his conduct and behaviour. The result is the lowering of the moral standard. An extension in social consciousness is achieved, but the intensity and integration of it becomes weak. Evidently the problem of the situation is a growth in the integration and intensity of the social consciousness, so that the new consciousness of a region or country is able to act almost as effectively as that of the village community. Or rather the personal moral consciousness of the individual develops to such an extent that he is able to guide himself properly, without much persuasion and restraint of the social consciousness.

The values of existence and personality that go with these developments are also the same as we have mentioned above in connection with science. The result is a cultural confusion, since these values militate against the values of traditional culture. Hence there is an urgent need for a conscious integration between these developments and the traditional culture.

The foregoing discussion has sought to bring out the most general features of the cultural situation that today arises for Asian countries as a whole. Surely different countries and regions present special situations too. South India has been a historical unity and it possesses certain distinctive features of its own. The traditional culture here, perhaps has a greater strength and solidarity. There have not been many external intrusions and, therefore, the cultural life has enjoyed a stability, which the North has not had. Further, the impact of industrialisation has not been much so far. Therefore a conscious guidance and control of the changes, as they may take place hereafter, may be easier. And the cultural synthesis and reorientation needed today may also be attempted more advantageously. The South contributed the cultural synthesis that constitutes Hinduism today. It may also contribute another synthesis, which may serve as the solution of the acute cultural problem of today.

It is interesting to note that in the South itself in Pondicherry, at the institution known as Sri Aurobindo Ashram, the North has met the South and the East the West and a cultural revaluation and recreation called for by the present institution has been diligently pursued for about forty years now. Sri Aurobindo had seen very early in his life that important new values were in the process of emergence in mankind. These he sought first to realise in himself and then through the institution of the Ashram and with

the collaboration of the Mother help others do the same and later extend the process further through a school and a university. The essential truth of his position is that the material-mental way of life has now reached its climax, where we see all its power and excellence, but also its limitations. The diversities and complexities of life now call for a larger, a more integral, a spiritual consciousness to organise, guide and direct it. The Ashram has been the place where a fresh synthesis of all the elements of life has been pursued under this perception and inspiration. The traditional culture is represented there in its essential spiritual content, which in complete self-confidence seeks to incorporate into itself modern science, technology, new social ideas and wide international contacts. The example of the Ashram shows that there is no inherent conflict between spirituality and science or for the matter of that any pursuit of secular life. In other words, it shows that the spirit is essentially an integral consciousness, which can comprehend all activities of the physical, vital and mental life of man. The problem today is to evolve the larger spiritual consciousness in man, integrate these activities into it and reorient all our life out of such consciousness. And the Ashram was intended as a pursuit and demonstration of it.

This paper has attempted a twofold task. It has sought to present an analysis, a reading of the present cultural situation of the world as a whole, of Asian countires and in particular of South India. However its greater emphasis is on the practical side as to what is called for now and what must be taken up, pursued and done. Hence we would close with the practical recommendations which we wish to make. These are:—

1. That science and technology should be duly integrated into the essential outlook of traditional culture and not just allowed to invade it, overwhelm and disrupt it.

2. That industry should not be allowed to become production-centred and make man a living tool of its process. Man must always remain the end.

3. That the process of industrialisation should be culturally guided and the transition from the village community to the community of the industrial centre smoothly achieved.

4. That the new social developments represented by democracy, liberalism, humanism, materialism, etc., too should be discriminatively readapted and integrated into traditional culture.

5. That traditional culture too should be critically re-examined and made aware of its responsibilities in the modern world.

These practical recommendations primarily suggest the major issues

of our life today. Under each one of them many measures and steps will have to be taken to realise a more intelligent growth of national life. And if we in Asia are able to see the full situation, recognise the forces of the modern world, bear in mind the essential truth of the traditional cultures and courageously attempt a true synthesis of them, then the results we might achieve would very likely be for the good of mankind as a whole.

INDRA SEN

THE LIFE DIVINE

AN OUTLINE

Vol II—CHAPTER VI

REALITY AND THE COSMIC ILLUSION

WE have to see whether the creative Power of the Universe is a force of Illusion or a true formation of being. From the point of view of Illusionism the universe is a system by which Maya works. The system is true and actual only within the Illusion. The sole abiding reality, beyond all duality of knowledge and ignorance, is the eternal pure Existence. Knowledge, therefore, is only a useful means of escaping from the Illusion. We have to see, however, whether all or any of the three elements of mental cognition,—the percipient, the perception and percept, which are the basis of our knowing—are illusory or not.

We can affirm the reality of things perceived and yet deny the reality of individual perception. Such is the case in materialism where matter is the sole reality and consciousness is but a vibration of the brain cells. The individual has only a temporary reality. Or the ultimate Real may be seen to be an Energy which ultimately takes on the appearance of a mental construction, temporary and issuing out of the Void of the Infinite. Thus in Buddhism there is the affirmation of Non-Being. Alternatively we might see the working of a Consciousness behind the Energy; and if this consciousness is not creating illusions out of a Void, then we must concede a conscious Energy as a reality, and its creations, as well as the individual consciousness emerging therefrom as realities also. The original Reality would then be seen to be an Omnipresent Existence in a real universe.

In classical Illusionism only the supreme spiritual Existence, the transcendent Self, is the one Reality, the universe and all creation are but temporary appearances. But what is the relation between the nameless and featureless Reality and the illusory cosmos?

The theory of Illusionism cannot admit of a real creative power of the Supreme; and the experience of the transcendence seems to confirm the absence of any real Becoming, and hence any real creation. Although the creative power (Maya) and its works are thus called illusions, yet we see that the universe has some kind of existence, for it is based on the one Reality. Moreover we ourselves become aware of the Reality (Brahman) in all things. The creative power is not then wholly un-real. What therefore is its nature?

First it is conceded that the one Reality is the witness or percipient of Maya and its works.

But since the consciousness of the Percipient is awareness of its own pure self-existence, there can be no illusion. The world, therefore, must be real, but yet it is not the pure self-existence and seems to contradict that conclusion, except that we see that it is a persistent world.

Maya as a reality may be a differentiating perception power of the Supreme, or at least some power of the Supreme. But if the Supreme is for ever a self-aware existence, then there must be a double status. This duality would contradict the unitive Vision of the Upanishads—that the world is made of the supreme Existence. By this duality, therefore, we are compelled to believe that our nature is not made of the spiritual substance.

If, however, we reject this dual consciousness, accepting Maya as the conscious power of the Supreme, then we may say that either Maya is a subjective action of the Supreme Consciousness, or Maya is the Supreme power of cosmic Imagination. But imagination is a faculty of a partial being, a supplement of its ignorant consciousness, and cannot belong to the Reality of the Sole Existence.

The former alternative—that Maya is a subjective action—starts from our distinction between subjective and objective experience. But this division cannot exist in the Supreme consciousness. We are forced to return to the duality of absolute being and creative consciousness as distinct entities. But this duality is precisely the process of our own consciousness in the Ignorance, which separates Nature (Prakriti) from the Self (Purusha). And this solution negates the ultimate Oneness of the Supreme.

If the duality of knowledge-Ignorance is valid for the Supreme, it is not as in our own divided consciousness. An Ignorance which appears as an intermediary stage, as part of a divine cosmic plan, is not the same as an illusion. If the Supreme has wilfully created a universe of illusions then the illusion cannot be for the Supreme, but is in the illusory world itself. Has the Supreme been compelled to create this drama, and if so what is the

necessity for the Supreme? There is undoubtedly a Will or Power, but it can only be for the creation of realities of the Real.

It may be, however, that there is no absolute reality to Maya and the universe. A certain dogmatism asserts that the Supreme is the sole truth, and hence we are thrown back on a cosmic Illusion and the problem of its relation to the Supreme. We cannot in this view accept that Maya is a power of the Supreme. Then either Maya does not exist or there are two entities, real Eternal and an illusive Power. In all this philosophical wrangling around a cosmic illusion, it is clear that no conclusion is possible. Along this line of reasoning we are forced back to a contradiction which cannot be resolved.

If the witness or percipient is the individual, and not the Supreme, then we arrive at a total unreality of both world and individual. Or alternatively the individual may be an eternal portion of the Supreme, entered into Maya and hence can withdraw from it. But if Maya is illusory then bondage is unreal and salvation unnecessary. To avoid this conclusion it may be said that it is the Supreme who withdraws and brings about our salvation. But the individual, even if he is a conscious reflection of the Supreme, cannot then profit by that salvation. The dissolving of all and the return to the pure Existence gives no justification for what has appeared as cosmos and individuality, unless we establish a dual consciousness which will give a certain reality to our existence.

Even though the individual and universe are unreal, it may be claimed that they acquire a certain temporary reality from the Supreme. But then what is the purpose of the experience and the liberation? We are compelled to say that it is the consciousness or the being of the Supreme that has put forth something of itself into the world, and then withdraws. But then the creative power (Maya) must come from the Supreme and be an action of the Superconscience. We are then driven back to the dual being and consciousness of the Supreme, one involved in the illusion of creation and the other free from the illusion. Only if the universe has a reality can there be a solution to an existence here. We have to admit that we are faced with a suprarational mystery.

One alternative against the idea of an absolute unreality may be that the universe is of the nature of a subjective illusion—consciousness which is part of Being. The Upanishads indicate four states of the being of the Supreme. There is the state of superconscience, containing everything but involved in nothing. There is a luminous status of sleep-self, which is the origin of cosmic existence. There is a dream-self, the continent of all subtle,

supraphysical experience. And there is the self of waking which is the support of all physical experience. These states of being which also correspond to man's own experience, are present in the larger subjective and objective cosmic experience of the Supreme. But what we ordinarily call the waking state is but the external sense of the reality of objects of consciousness. True waking is the superconscience. Below the superconscience all is Maya, both real (since the Supreme has entered it) and unreal (since it is a sleep or other transient state). It is One Being in states of superconscience and Consciousness each with its own nature of self-experience. But the multiple existence of the state of consciousness is subjective and hence there is no objective universe.

This does not mean that the creation is unreal, though constructed by Maya. It is the Supreme that has become all these beings. Not only the superconscience is the Reality, but all that is is the Reality. Clearly the fourfold status of the Supreme in subjective terms is a figurative description.

It is now clear that these experiences formulated in the Upanishads are derived from subliminal experiences which open us to the wider cosmic planes (—see footnote on 'Prajna—'). Thus the sleep state and the dream state refer to the superconscient and subliminal planes beyond the surface mental consciousness. It is through the subliminal and the superconscient that we can pass to the supreme superconscience, the highest state of self-being. But if, instead of through sleep, we pass into these states through spiritual awakening we become aware of the omnipresent Reality in all of them. It is thus possible (through soul-awakening) to have a unified experience in which we see the Reality everywhere. It is only when we pass abruptly, as in trance, into the Superconscient that the mind is seized by the sense of unreality of cosmic existence. This experience has been the basis of the idea of an illusory world created by Maya.

Such solutions to establish the nature of Maya inevitably result in two irreconcilable opposites—an eternal Reality and a cosmic Illusion—which cannot be bridged. If the cosmic multiplicity is declared an illusion then we have a dual status of consciousness of the One, instead of a dual status of being.

Our conception of an absolute Reality which is one, supracosmic and immutable is clearly incomplete, unless we see that this pure existence is supporting an eternal dynamis of itself. The cosmic consciousness would thus be an experience of some truth of the Absolute. We have to examine this possible alternative to the idea of an eternal illusion.

But first there is another question to consider regarding the illusionist theory as propounded by Shankara. This theory rests on the distinction between the two orders of reality—transcendental and pragmatic—as we experience them. The former is the reality of pure being, and the latter the reality of the relative and temporal cosmos. There is a reality also for the individual self who is really the Supreme in essence within the field of Maya. The universe is also real for a consciousness in Time. But are the universe and ourselves partly real and partly unreal, or an unreal reality? If there is any true reality then there is no illusory creation; if partly unreal then it points to a mixture of knowledge and ignorance. What we have to see then is how the ignorance came to intervene. Only if the universe and the individuals are an unreal reality do they become in the end an illusion.

The crux of the difficulty regarding the unreality of the universe rests on the differing standpoints of the mind itself. For when it withdraws from its own imperfect picture of the universe it regards the world as a fiction and unreal. But this is because the gulf between the transcendent Reality and the cosmic Reality has become too great, so that the true connections between them cannot be seized by the mind. In a higher status of consciousness the connection is established, and we see that the cosmic is dependent on the supracosmic.

But because the universe is temporary and not eternal, is it then unreal? We have to see that the relation between the Imperishable and the perishable is the same as that between the original reality and the resultant manifested reality. The form disappears, but the power of manifestation continues. The cosmic is thus a different order of the Real from the supracosmic, but not therefore unreal. The temporal is not cancelled out by the timeless Eternity.

Similarly we cannot say that the silent and quiescent status of the Eternal is the whole truth, and hence that the dynamic aspect and pragmatic truth is unreal. The cosmic reality can only be the result of a dynamic force of the Absolute, that is, the force of Consciousness itself. Creations of the Real must be real.

On one hand we experience the universe as immutable and non-active, and on the other as a dynamis of action. But it is rational to suppose that the eternal status contains an eternal force which is the source of action; both status and movement are then real, as well as simultaneous. Our experience of creation itself confirms this fact, that action must be supported on or by status. This is a permanent principle. From the standpoint of the

stable Reality all movement only appears to be impermanent, since a persistent action of real energy is ever-present. We have to conclude that eternal status and eternal dynamis are both true of the Reality which surpasses both status and dynamis.

In our own experience we find that it is in the quietude when we begin to feel the Something behind the world. In our outer action we only grasp the finite, but not the eternal. Is this because action itself cannot belong to the eternal? But such reasoning cannot be valid while we regard action only from the experience of our surface being. Action itself is not a limitation; it does not bind the spiritual Person or psychic entity in us. Action is limiting only when it expresses itself through a limited part of our being. Our inner essential being remains the same in all action which is a means of expression of our outer nature-being. This latter belongs to the temporal order of reality, the becoming, the manifestation of the Eternal, and is a reality.

Shankara's philosophy introduces an opposition; the experience of the intuition on the one hand, and that of the intellectual reason on the other. The latter can only judge the phenomenal world, but not what is beyond, which only intuition can see. From the standpoint of reason, the phenomenon belongs to a temporal order which is not the Reality beyond phenomenon. Hence the phenomenon must be unreal. Cosmic existence is explained (in the Shankara philosophy) as having originated from an immutable and self-existent Transcendence. This latter manifests itself as the Self (or Absolute) and the Ishwara (or Lord). The Ishwara by his power of phenomenal creation (Maya) constructs the world as a temporal phenomenon, which is thus imposed. Only the Self, and not the individual existence, is real; and likewise only the Ishwara, and not the phenomenal world, is real.

This conclusion results from an unresolved contradiction between the data of spiritual intuition and that of reason. An ambiguity has come which fixes the world as real in Time, but unreal transcendentally. Thus also is Ishwara (the Lord or Creator) both real and unreal; and so is the individual self. This ambiguity is only resolved by seeing that the creator (Ishwara) is real, and is the transcendent itself dealing with a cosmos manifested in his own being. Similarly the world (the creation) must be the manifest action of a truth of the transcendence. And thirdly the individual, since he has the power of self-discovery and entrance into the transcendent, must be a reality of the transcendence.

The mystery is insoluble by intellectual reason because the Tran-

scendence is suprarational. Hence we must pass beyond the intellect to resolve the contradiction and bridge the gulf. It is in fact by passing beyond intellectual reason that we find through spiritual experience the true reconciling oneness of the Absolute (or Brahman) and see that all things are That. Two great sages, Buddha and Shankara, realised an intuitive vision beyond reason. While Buddha merely sought for final release from all constructions by the use of reason, Shankara sought the suprarational Truth beyond reason. But reason remained for Shankara an unreal reality. We have to go beyond these two standpoints in order to realise that the mystery of the universe must have a divine sense in respect to the Divine Reality.

Beginning from the intuitive view and the oneness and allness of Reality we see that the universe is real. The universe does not reveal its supreme form because it is a progressive self-expression, a manifestation of the Supreme in Time. Thus it is both That (the Supreme) and not That. Looking deeply we see that all finites are the Infinite in their essence. The manifestation must then be an expression of the self-force of the Absolute, the result of its Will to become or create. The Will is a force of being of the Absolute, which displays itself as a power of itself in action.

It is our individual sense of separativeness, and the conception of the finite as a self-existent object that is at the root of unreality. The finite conception is necessary for the action of the surface being. But in the inner consciousness the finite still exists but as being and power and manifestation of the Infinite, and not separate from That. The individual's experience of the disappearance of finite forms indicates his withdrawal from manifestation, not the unreality of it. Forms are temporary only in their appearance on the surface; they are eternal in their essential power of manifestation.

The illusion theory of Maya cannot at all solve the problem of existence, since its finality is nothingness. From this basis even the spiritual experience of the transcendent cannot be disentangled from illusion. Sooner or later one has even to deny the reality of the Absolute, as in Buddhism.

To avoid this absolute Nihilism we are obliged to admit a certain validity for the experience and knowledge by which we grow into the Spirit. We have then to admit a valid reality to the temporal and the experience in it. What we face then is not an illusion but an ignorance. The only solution therefore is a truth that reconciles the truth of our existence and the world-existence, and their right relation to the transcendent Reality, the source of everything.

The theory of Illusion is but an escape from the world problem. It sublimates only one impulse of our being. Only a knowledge of the totality can find the justifying reason of ignorance, and through an all-reconciling oneness point out the solution and true cure.

We have to turn to spiritual illumination to find the highest confirmation for an integral truth. Illusionism itself rests on a spiritual realisation; that is, the passing into the silent Spirit when thought itself is stilled. From that realisation, the individual as well as cosmos appear as illusions. Either the Self-Existent remains the sole Reality, or a pure Consciousness, or a timeless Eternal and spaceless Infinite. This spiritual experience of the Infinite carries with it a convincing sense of finality. We find, however, that it is only the penultimate experience. Beyond this great negating Silence we come to realise a positive Divine, a vast integral Reality and Oneness. The negative experience is but a step—the clearing of the way, so to speak. The all-inclusive truth of all spiritual experience gives the integral knowledge. The true knowledge of the Absolute is the key to all knowledge and is not the key to illusion.

In the many-sided Manifestation, all truths have their validity; but they are truths of a largest Truth in which all is reconciled. Spiritual experiences, religions and philosophies all have a value and a truth; they represent the infinity of aspects of the Infinite. At a certain stage the mind begins to fix itself on a larger truth or a single absorbing experience. It is then that lesser truths appear to be unreal. This exclusion, however, leads to a negative absorbing experience of the silent immobile Absolute. But if a wider all-inclusive view is taken from this new spiritual vision, the negation of Nirvana and the affirmation of the cosmic consciousness reach a widest Oneness. This experience marks the passage from the mental to the overmind cognition. The whole manifestation is a harmony, which reveals its totality when the soul-vision reaches the border of supermind itself.

We have to explore the possibility of this ascent in Consciousness. The theory of cosmic Illusion stands as a challenge to any worthwhile attempt to make an intermediary ascent through the cosmic manifestation. Investigation has led to the conclusion that illusionism is not the obligatory end of an enquiry into the ultimate truth. We have rather to consider the wider problem that is excluded by the illusionist theory—the problem of the Knowledge and the Ignorance.

We have to ascertain first "What is Reality?" Our finite consciousness is limited and must be different from an ultimate Consciousness. We know

that the phenomenal reality depends on and arises out of an essential Reality. But our ordinary sense-knowledge of the phenomenal reality contradicts the findings of Science; reason commencing from sense-experience builds its own varying notions of the real. Thus the physical scientist views mind as a subjective result of matter, and as an observer more or less independent of the physical reality. The psychologist, on the other hand, sees more subjective realities of mind; and to him Mind may be the key to the real, and matter only a field for mind. A further probing, however, establishes the truth of self and spirit as a greater order of the real. Mind and matter are then seen as a lesser order of the real.

It is the faculty of reason that proceeds by exclusion, since it ordinarily has to deal with finites. But when reason comes to deal with the spiritual, which belongs to the wholeness, its segmenting process cuts a division between the spirit and its manifestation, seeing one as infinite and real, and the other finite and unreal. A higher consciousness above finite reason sees the single integral view of reality. It sees that unreality cannot persist as continuous existence through all Time, unless based on the realities of the Spirit. There is thus a deeper and more significant reality in the movements of existence. Finite reason and sense, we see, erect partial constructions of truth, and thus do not take this integral view. The phenomenal world itself, in fact, is a power, a movement and process of the Infinite.

An ultimate consciousness, as origin, would necessarily be all-embracing. It would see the essence of things, but their motions and consequences, contradictions to the finite mind, would not represent unrealities; they are in fact complementaries. In this way essence and phenomenon are complementary; and similarly finite and infinite, individual and universal. The unitarian comprehensive view sees no contradiction in a formless Essence carrying a multitude of forms, or an Infinite supporting s dynamis, or an infinite Oneness expressing itself as a multiplicity. This in fact is the natural action of the Infinite. It is the finite reason by its separating and opposing action that has created the problem and the difficulty. We have to pass beyond finite reason and sense to a larger reason and spiritual sense in touch with the consciousness and logic of the Infinite.

At first the limitless Absolute seems a paradox to the mind. It is limited neither by formlessness nor form, immobile status nor dynamic mobility; neither multiplicity nor motion can limit it. Illimitability is in fact a universal quality shared even by material things. The impression of limitation belongs

only to the mind and sense. The finite is not something independent and separate from the Infinite.

The Absolute is to be approached through experience; both reason and speech are inadequate. There are three principal channels through which we can approach the Absolute: as an absolute negation or supreme Non-Existence; as absolute affirmation, of Light, Knowledge, Love, Force; and as the Divine Nature, of being, consciousness, power, or delight. To experience the Absolute does not mean a negation of individuality and cosmos. The individual must, however, exceed his ego-existence, and approach and enter into the Absolute through his spiritual individuality. He can thus enter into a superme existence, a supreme consciousness or supreme delight. Or he can enter into cosmic consciousness, experiencing simultaneously oneness and multiplicity. All these channels are possible because the Absolute is the transcendent, the support of all things, as well as the essence of all things.

If the Absolute is the supreme reality, does it necessarily follow that all else is unreal? This can only be claimed if we make a rigid division between uncreated Being and created existences. But since we can approach and enter into the Absolute, through these created existences, there can be no real division. The creation is the manifestation of the Real, a process in Time based on a Timeless Reality. Timeless eternity and time eternity are two aspects of the Eternal and Absolute, and both are real.

Where there is being there is consciousness, both are dependent on each other. The Inconscient is both involved consciousness and non-manifest being: while the opposite cosmic pole of the superconscient is consciousness luminously involved in being. The former is the source of the evolutionary emergence, and the latter the source of Cosmos, and both find their unification in the Oneness of Eternal Being and eternal Consciousness-Force of the Absolute.

If both cosmic existence and the Absolute are real, how do we account for their opposite natures, the diversification on the one hand and the oneness on the other? We see that the cause of unreality lies in the Ignorance. It is the Mind that creates unreality. But this world is a mixture of knowledge and ignorance, a half-expression of the real which is incomplete. Ignorance then means a partial, limited manifestation of the Real. But it is not a static condition, but a dynamic one rooted in the evolutionary principle. Thus a greater manifestation becomes possible in material Nature.

We have to see also that in Mind itself there is a pragmatic side of it

which sees only the material universe as the actuality. There are however, behind this outer reality the possibilities of other truths of being, supra-physical realities, which cannot be seized on by the pragmatic mind. These are not unrealities, but are the unrealised potentialities. This type of unreality is distinct from that due to an erroneous conception of things, a false construction of the mind due to its limitation by Ignorance. Both these aspects point to a cosmic Ignorance which is the heart of the problem. For not only the individual, but the whole manifest existence is involved in the ignorance. It is in fact a partial and unfinished creation or evolution. Our consciousness, being thus limited sees only parts of the manifestation, as separate entities. This separative awareness is the root of errors. We see only that the material universe has arisen from an Inconscience and do not see the connection with any original Being and Consciousness.

How then did this original illimitable consciousness and force enter into and become this limitation and separativeness for a solution of this problem we have to see the origin of the Ignorance and the Inconscience and their relations to the original Superconscience.

N. PEARSON

THE MOTHER'S TEACHINGS

(II)

THE aim of human life should be, according to the Mother, not personal salvation or a compassionate service of humanity, or some kind of partial and precarious contact[1] with the Supreme Reality, but throwing "a bridge between That which eternally is, but is not manifested, and that which is manifested; between all the transcendences, all the splendours of the divine life, and all the obscure and sorrowful ignorance of the material world."[2] It is not enough for man to seek and attain personal liberation, mukti; it is not desirable for him to strain after self-extinction in the Absolute, leaving the world as it is; it is not his highest fulfilment to remain immersed in the bliss of God's embrace, oblivious of God's Will and purpose in His creation. He has to awake to the meaning of his earthly life, the real significance of his soul's Odyssey in the material world. The Mother says that he is born to "throw a bridge between that which has to be and that which is." His life has, therefore, a special mission far beyond the scope of his little, perishable personality and the orbit of his normal, individual interests; and his perfection and fulfilment can come only by an accomplishment of that mission.

What is the actual nature of the bridge he has to construct between "all the transcendences, all the splendours of the divine life, and all the obscure and sorrowful ignorance of the material world?"

Before we consider this question, it would be interesting and useful to learn what the Mother's attitude is to the cult of humanism and the gospel of humanitarian service, so much valued by the modern mind, for it is this that seems to be taken now as the highest aim of human life. Humanism, it may be safely stated, has either ousted religion from the thought of man or remoulded it into its own image; so much so that most of the

[1] No contact can be full and secure so long as the body remains untransformed.

[2] Prayers & Meditations of the Mother—August 29, 1914

religions that have stood the onslaught of scientific materialism have become frankly humanistic and thought it expedient to seat man by the side of God, if the latter has at all been spared any place in the sanctuary of worship. Religious humanism is the most popular form of religion today, and is even regarded by many as the best, because most practical, form of spiritual sadhana. The service of man, it is held, is the service of God. Surely, all this is to the good, and a necessary corrective to the ascetic and anti-pragmatic tendencies of religion in the past, as well as to the impetuous drive of the hedonistic cravings of today. Humanitarian service, undertaken in the right spirit, is a purifying ethical force and has undeniably an important part to play in the present state of human society. It is a potent leveller of social barriers, a solvent of grossly selfish desires, and a cementing bond of mankind. But the truth has to be admitted that it is not, in itself, and in any real sense, religious or spiritual. Have those who engage in it with a sincere devotion any knowledge as to how mankind has to be saved and helped? Do they know with anything like certainty in what consists the happiness of mankind? Is it only food and comfort and abundant material amenities, is it only the arts and sciences and intellectual aims and interests that make men happy? Has humanism been able to effect any real and abiding welfare of humanity? It is a simultaneous perception of the comparative vanity of all humanitarian work and the absolute and imperious necessity of relying only upon the Divine for the betterment of human life that made the Mother reply in a categoric negative when she was asked if the Yoga taught by her was for the welfare of humanity. "No", she said with a ring of finality in her voice, "it is for the sake of Divinity. It is not the welfare of humanity that we seek but the manifestation of the Divine. We are here to work out the Divine Will, more truly, to be worked upon by the Divine Will so that we may be its instruments for the progressive incorporation of the Supreme and the establishment of His reign upon earth."[1] The humanist or the modern lover of humanity will, no doubt, feel aghast at such a blunt reply; but if he calmly reflects for a moment, freeing himself from his perfervid humanitarian obsessions, he will understand and readily admit that none can be a greater lover of humanity than God, who is its eternal Source and Guide, and that He alone knows and His Will alone can achieve what is best for it; for His Knowledge, unlike the knowledge of man, is all-seeing, and His Will, unlike the will

[1] The Words of the Mother.

of man, is all-achieving. This was, more or less, the view of Sri Ramakrishna also. He repeatedly exhorted his disciples to make self-realisation and God-realisation the primary object of life, and not to rush into the service of others without having first armed themselves with knowledge and secured the badge (*chāprās*) of God's gracious sanction. The greatest good one can do others, he used to say, is to help them attain self-knowledge and rise out of their slavery to sense objects. It is interesting to recall in this connection that once—was it not in Kashmir?—when Vivekananda, distressed by the tumble-down condition of an old temple, felt a strong urge to collect funds and set about repairing it, the goddess of the temple appeared before him in dream and peremptorily ordered him to give up the project, saying: "Who art thou to presume to repair my temple?" It is, indeed, a presumption of the ambitious ignorance of man that makes him think that he can really help others when, in fact, he does not even know how to help himself. Essentially it is a movement of human egoism, either rajasic or sattwa-rajasic. Modern humanism is a legacy of Greek culture[1] to Western humanity, and it has now permeated human thought all the world over, threatening to swamp all higher spiritual values. Among the many factors that make for its universal spread and appeal, there is one which we may single out as being typical of modern mentality. Humanism springs from the benevolence of the developed reason of man. It is a movement of the self-extension of the human mind based on an incipient perception of universal unity, in which the ego of man takes a growing, self-righteous delight. But because it derives from reason, the modern human mind finds it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to escape from its glittering toils and soar beyond into the Infinite. And unless the domain of the reason is overpassed, there can be no authentic experience of the spiritual life. As man has partly risen or is trying to rise from the welter of his animal instincts and impulses into the relative order and balance of his reason, so he has, if he wants to transcend his present mental self, to rise from the dimness and imperfect order of his reason[2] into the infinite light and harmony of his spiritual Self. But the modern mind passionately protests that it can renounce everything, but not its reason, the sheet-anchor of its existence in the present cultural crisis; and it is content—is it really?—to remain a prisoner of its own reason, unaware of

[1] It has imbibed very little of the original or medieval Christian influence.

[2] cf. In the higher communion, the night of thought is the light of perception—Patmore.

the fact that it is its very reason that has brought about the present cultural crisis by opposing the human soul's advance towards the Infinite and Eternal. Humanism, born of the mental reason and fortified by it, gloats over its passing triumphs and masquerades as practical spirituality in the modern world.

It is true that in ancient India also the humanitarian ideal was held very high, but it was never confounded with spirituality. It was considered an effective individual discipline in disinterestedness and an infallible means of developing the sattwic quality in man. The ancients knew that true spiritual life begins only when there is a conscious and sustained endeavour to transcend sattwa and embrace the Infinite. Humanitarianism was never made to do duty for spiritual aspiration and attainment. Ancient spiritual tradition regarded life as belonging to the Divine and all its movements as meant to be offered to Him in a steady stream of self-consecration. It was the Will of the Divine that was sought to be fulfilled, and not the erring principles and predilections of the ignorant human mind. Besides, the spirit of Indian humanitarianism was essentially different from that of the modern Western humanitarianism. In the West humanitarian work is begun with an air of intellectual or economic superiority and a sense of self-justifying pride. It ends by turning service into a supercilious, if not high-handed, patronage. The various modern aids to the under-developed countries may be cited as an apt illustration of it. But in ancient India he who helped others felt grateful to those whom he helped for having given him an opportunity to serve God in them and thereby make an humble effort towards self-abnegation and self-purification. Selfless service was regarded as sacramental, and a preparation for spiritual life. But once one took to spiritual life, one was absolved from all human duties, sacred and secular, and sought nothing but the realisation of the soul or the Brahman or the fulfilment of the divine Will.[1] And yet service of man, the good of society, the welfare of humanity, सर्वभूतहित, flowed spontaneously from his true spiritual living, his union with the Divine. It was not his ego, but his liberated soul, directed by the Divine, or by some light from above, that was the doer of his humanitarian work. It was held that the best service one could render mankind was not to make it helpless by imposing upon it an extraneous help and crippling its powers of initiative and self-reliance (as

[1] cf. The business of a spiritual man is to "harness his fiery energies to the service of the light," according to the Western mystic, Boehme.

the modern aids often do), but to unseal its eye of knowledge, to help it rise beyond the dualities of earthly existence and attain freedom and bliss in the arms of the Divine. Economic humanism cannot make man happy; even the higher forms of humanism advocated and practised today cannot permanently deliver him from sorrow and suffering, disease and death. It is only the divine Truth and knowledge, the divine Love and Grace, that can lead him to everlasting happiness and unebbing peace.

"How painful and miserable seems to me their life of ignorance and obscurity, their life of foolish agitation and profitless dissipation, when a single spark of Thy sublime light, a single drop of Thy divine love can transform this suffering into an ocean of Joy."[1]

Mother's love of man is a natural corollary to her love of God, for God not only dwells in man as He dwells in every other being and thing, but it is in man that He is most manifest, and it is in man alone that He wills to manifest His divine perfection. If the Mother does not attach much importance to the beneficent means adopted by the humanist—his cherished moral, political and ecomonic recipes—it is because she knows that they do not go far in the solace and succour of humanity; for, how can one who is himself fettered and ignorant impart freedom and knowledge to others? How can one who is himself subject to sorrow and suffering bring about the happiness of others? It is only by completely belonging to God and God alone, and being moved only by His all-seeing Will, which is the marshalled Force of His Love, that man can best serve humanity and the world. It is only by serving the One that he can fruitfully serve the many. It is only by watering and manuring its roots that he can make the trunk and branches and leaves and flowers of the tree of life thrive and bloom in perfect splendour, तस्मिन् तुष्टे जगत् तुष्टम्.

To return now to the bridge man is meant to construct. The Mother says that the earth has been till now governed by what Sri Aurobindo calls the Overmind or the world of the cosmic gods. It is the overmental consciousness and its forces that have presided over and influenced the evolution of the earth consciousness. "Above the mind there are several levels of conscious being, among which the really divine world is what Sri Aurobindo has called the Supermind, the world of the Truth. But in between is what he has distinguished as the Overmind, the world of the cosmic Gods. Now it is this Overmind that has up to the

[1] The Prayers and Meditations of the Mother.

present governed our world: it is the highest that man has been able to attain in illumined consciousness. It has been taken for the Supreme Divine and all those who have reached it have never for a moment doubted that they have touched the true Spirit. For, its splendours are so great to the ordinary human consciousness that it is absolutely dazzled into believing that here at last is the crowning reality. And yet the fact is that the Overmind is far below the true Divine. It is not the authentic home of the Truth. It is only the domain of the *formateurs,* all those creative powers and deities to whom men have bowed down since the beginning of history. And the reason why the true Divine has not manifested and transformed the earth-nature is precisely that the Overmind has been mistaken for the Supermind. The cosmic Gods do not wholly live in the Truth-consciousness: they are only in touch with it and represent, each of them, an aspect of its glories....Not that the Overmind is a field of ignorance; but it is the border-line between the Higher and the Lower....The Overmind, therefore, does not and cannot possess the power to transform humanity into divine nature. For that, the Supramental is the sole effective agent".[1]

The Mother declares that the rule of the Overmind is coming to an end and that the rule of the Supermind will replace it. "What we want, what is needed at present is a new revelation, a manifestation in a new manner of which very few were conscious in the past. We are not here merely to repeat the past."[2]

Man has, therefore, to "throw a bridge" between the Supermind and his earthly abode. He has to unite the summit and the base of creation. It is only by this union, never achieved till now, that the difficulties of his earthly existence will be decisively overcome and his latent divinity find at last a congenial climate for its perfect outflowering. In her Prayers and Meditations the Mother has repeatedly expressed this idea, this aspiration and will in definite terms:

"All that has been conceived and realised up to now is mediocre, commonplace, insufficient compared with what has to be. The perfections of the past have no longer any force at present. A new puissance is needed to transform the new powers and make them submit to Thy divine will."[3]

This "bridge" is a double ladder of ascent and descent. Our consciousness must, getting past the dazzling splendours of the Overmind,

[1] The Words of the Mother, 3rd series.
[2] The Yoga of Sri Aurobindo by Nolini Kanta Gupta—part VII.
[3] June 17, 1914

rise into the golden glory of the Supermind, and the Light-Force of the Supermind must descend into our material existence to transform our human nature into dynamic divine nature. This double movement distinguishes the Integral Yoga taught by the Mother from all other Yogas.

In one of her recent messages the Mother declared: "Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute: A new light breaks upon the earth, a new world is born, the things that were promised are fulfilled."[1]

Asked as to what the things promised are, the Mother said, "They have been promised since a very long time ago, they have been spoken of since far past times,—not here (meaning the Ashram), but since the beginning of the earth,—there have been all sorts of predictions made by different prophets, saying: 'There shall be a new heaven and a new earth, a new race shall be born, the world shall be transformed,' etc. etc.; and prophets have spoken of these things in all the traditions."

So, the supramental Light dreamt of and aspired for and awaited for countless years has at long last come down and entered into the earth-nature. There is, the Mother says, a distinct change in the earth-atmosphere. The supreme Light, the highest creative Force, the transfiguring Grace is here, at constant work to transmute the conditions of human evolution and accelerate its pace. It is at work also, in a general way, in delivering the whole earth-consciousness from the forces of darkness. "The promised things shall be fulfilled". Man, the half-animal sport of circumstances, shall be transformed in all the parts of his being and live an integrated, dynamic life in the Divine. His mind will be lit up with the supramental Light; his intellectual reason, of which he is so very proud today, will disappear in the Truth-revealing play of Intuition; his heart will thrill to the inexpressible rapture of God's embrace; his will will be a flame-channel of God's Will; his body will be a radiant temple of the unveiled Divine; his action an umimpeded flow of God's creative energies—all his life a paean of God's Grace and Glory.

Speaking of the supramental body which has to be brought into being, the Mother says that it will have four main attributes: lightness, adaptability, plasticity and luminosity. "When the physical body is thoroughly divinised, it will feel as if it is always walking on air, there will be no heaviness or tamas or unconsciousness in it. There will also be no end to its power of adaptability: in whatever conditions it is placed it will immediately be

[1] The Mother India, May, 1956

equal to the demands made upon it, because its full consciousness will drive out all that inertia and incapacity which usually make Matter a drag on the Spirit. Supramental plasticity will enable it to stand the attack of every hostile force which strives to pierce it: it will present no dull resistance to the attack but will be, on the contrary, so pliant as to nullify the force by giving way to it to pass off. Thus it will suffer no harmful consequences and the most deadly attacks will leave it unscathed. Lastly, it will be turned into the stuff of light, each cell will radiate the supramental glory. Not only those who are developed enough to have their subtle sight open but the ordinary man too will be able to perceive this luminosity. It will be an evident fact to each and all, a permanent proof of the transformation which will convince even the most sceptical."[1] The supramental perfection will not only make man divine in every fibre of his being, not only render him invulnerable to the forces of ignorance and falsehood, evil and suffering, but also enable him to live the divine life by an integral, dynamic union with the Purushottama. No other perfection can ever achieve this complete and crowning result. To live in the Divine in the fully waking and active state of consciousness, in a constant and dynamic union—union in the very cells of the body, union in the will and the life parts, union in the mind and the soul—has never been achieved till now, because there was no such conscious endeavour to realise the supramental perfection in life. Now that the supramental descent has taken place and the supramental Light is breaking upon the earth, one can confidently hope that earth's gloom and agony will at last melt away and man, the dupe of his animal nature,[2] will be transformed into a conscious channel of God's Love and Light.

The Mother had visualised this descent of Love and Light in her deeper consciousness as far back as 1914, and her words sound so prophetic today in the light of what has taken place:

"From this centre,[3] this burning nucleus which is and will be more and more penetrated with Thy light and love, Thy forces will radiate over the whole earth, visibly and invisibly, in the hearts of men and in their thought.

[1] The Words of the Mother—3rd Series

[2] "Man without God ceases to be man"—Berdyaev

[3] Evidently she meant the Ashram

"An immense wave of love descends upon everything and penetrates all.

"Peace, peace on all earth, victory, plenitude, marvel.

"O beloved children, sorrowful and ignorant, and thou, O rebellions and violent Nature, open your hearts, tranquillise your force, it is the omnipotence of Love that is coming to you, it is the pure radiance of the light that is penetrating you. This human, this earthly hour is most beautiful among all hours. Let each, let all know it and enjoy the plenitude that is accorded.

O saddened hearts and anxious foreheads, foolish obscurity and ignorant ill-will, let your anguish be calmed and effaced.

This is the splendour of the new word that comes:

'I AM HERE.' "[1]

RISHABHCHAND

[1] Prayers and Meditations—June 9, 1914

REVIEW

Yogi Aravind va Antarjnan By *Prof. Balwant Ganesh Khaparde*. Publisher: Secretary, Marathi Theosophical Federation, 917/18 Ganeshwadi, Poona 4. Pp. 20, Price 0-4-0.

A number of biographies of Sri Aurobindo have been written. And several more will surely be coming as more and more of him is let known by those who were fortunate enough to come into personal contact with the Master. For he himself was, as a rule, more than taciturn regarding happenings and events in his own life which are always manna to the biographer. One therefore looks forward with eagerness to every authentic account by those who came within his radiant aura. The present brochure (in Marathi) is one such with an appetising flavour.

Prof. B.G. Khaparde (formerly of the Banaras Hindu University) was 18 when he set out for Calcutta for his college education in 1908-9. He carried a letter from his father Dadasaheb Khaparde—prominent nationalist leader of Maharashtra—to his illustrious collegues, Sri Aurobindo, Bipin Chandra Pal and Motilal Ghose of the A.B. Patrika fame, entrusting him to their care as local guardians of the young student. Sri Aurobindo promptly complied with the request and arranged with the youngster that he should call on him (at his residence in 5 College Square)[1] for an hour every Sunday. Later, due to preoccupation with the newly started Weekly Journal *Karmayogin*, Sri Aurobindo could not spare one hour at a time and so it was changed to half-an-hour each Wednesday and Sunday. On number of occasions the meetings took place at the Karmayogin Office in Shampukur Lane in Shyambazaar and these continued till Sri Aurobindo left Calcutta in 1910. Many were the subjects that were discussed, but Mr. Khaparde is not—we hope only for the moment—disposed to take us into confidence over all of them. He has chosen to give in this book, only those dicta of Sri Aurobindo which bear on spiritual and occult topics,

[1] where his maternal uncle Babu Krishnakumar Mitra lived.

words which have continued to reverberate in his ears, accompanied by appropriate visual recollections, all these forty-five years and more,—'lakhs of times' as he puts it. As far as possible he has tried to quote the very words of Sri Aurobindo as he remembers them. The author shows commendable rectitude of spirit in seeking to see that no injustice is done to Sri Aurobindo by the least inexactitude.

Thus for instance he writes:

One day he (Sri Aurobindo) said, "*A new humanity is coming.*" I told him that the theosophists also (the author himself is a keen theosophist) had prophesied in the same vein. He asked, "*Is that so, where?*" Then I spoke to him of articles by leaders like Leadbeater. Later, on one or two occasions he repeated, "*A new humanity is coming.*" I have a recollection he added, "*I am working for it*", though I am not sure whether he said "*working*" or "*preparing*". (p. 3)

To take a few of the author's reminiscences:

Once when he spoke to Sri Aurobindo of the theory of theosophists that Thoughts have forms and their own hues and that even some diagrams of the forms had been published, he replied: "*It is all true. I have seen it.*"

On day Sri Aurobindo told him : "*Once when I was practising Yoga, he whom the theosophists call Master K.H.*[1] *came and stood before me, and watched my Yoga. I requested him to accept me as his disciple; but he said 'Your Master is different.'* "

Speaking of Sri Aurobindo's incarceration in jail, the author observve that the acquittal was entirely due to the sense of justice of the judge Sir Laurence Jenkins. While not expressing our view of the matter, we would only like to make a factual correction: the name of the judicial officer who presided over the preliminary proceedings was Mr. Birley and the Judge in the Sessions Court who conducted and judged the case was Mr. Beechcroft. Sir Laurence only confirmed the acquittal judgment of Mr. Beechcroft.

Referring to the famous speech at Uttarpara in which Sri Aurobindo spoke of his realisation of Vasudeva everywhere while in jail, the author says he asked Sri Aurobindo why he spoke of it so publicly. In reply Sri Aurobindo said, the author records, "*It is true. Sri Krishna used to come to me, and I have passed many nights in his arms.*"

The author also raises the oft-asked question, who was the Guru of Sri Aurobindo? and goes on to refute the belief of many that it was Sri Lele. What he says on the subject is interesting:

[1] Kuthumi

Sri Vishnu Bhasker Lele is the name of a gentleman who used to live in Amraoti (Madhyapradesh). He was a theosophist and belonged to the Inner Circle. He was an ordinary clerk in the local *kachery*; but he was a very affable and good man. He used to come to our place regularly....Once when Sri Aurobindo met him somewhere he asked him about some doubt that had arisen in his Sadhana. Sri Aurobindo was then new to the line and Lele's answer proved to be of immense value. Sri Aurobindo used to speak of this now and then to those close to him, before his retirement. He spoke of it to me also. This has led to the belief that Lele was his Guru. But that is erroneous. What Lele told him by way of instruction was only once and only in one matter.

Once Sri Aurobindo sent the following message to Lele through me: "*When you go to Amraoti tell Lele that I do not do anything now. The Shakti does everything through me.*" And he added to me, "*even if you do not understand what I say, repeat these words to him.*" I did as directed. Lele patted me on the back and said "Very good, very good. Tell Babusaheb 'Very good' ".

The author also records Sri Aurobindo telling him once: "*I do not see my Guru. I only hear his Voice*", and asks, would Sri Aurobindo say so if he had considered Lele to be his Guru? [1]

It would be useful to know what Sri Aurobindo himself has to say regarding what spiritual help he received and from whom:

"I began my Yoga in 1904 without a Guru; in 1908 I received important help from a Mahratta Yogi and discovered the foundations of my sadhana; but from that time till the Mother came to India I received no spiritual help

Relevant to the point in question are the following excerpts from *The Liberator* By Sisir Kumar Mitra, pp. 96-97:

"Before parting from Lele," Sri Aurobindo said, "I asked for his instructions. He was giving me detailed instructions. In the meantime I told him of a Mantra that had arisen in my heart. Suddenly while giving instructions he stopped and asked me if I could rely absolutely on Him who gave me the Mantra. I replied that I could always do that. Then Lele said that there was no need of further instructions."....

"When Lele met Sri Aurobindo in Calcutta and made enquiries about his Yoga, Sri Aurobindo told him that he had stopped sitting down in meditation in a formal way since it was practically going on all the time. On this Lele said that the Devil had taken possession of him and offered him certain instructions. Sri Aurobindo listened in silence and said nothing. He had received a command from within that a human Guru was no longer necessary for him."

from anyone else. My sadhana before and afterwards was not founded upon books but upon personal experiences that crowded on me from within. But in the jail I had the Gita and the Upanishads with me, practised the yoga of the Gita and meditated with the help of the Upanishads, these were the only books from which I found guidance; the Veda which I first began to read long afterwards in Pondicherry rather confirmed what experiences I already had than was any guide to my sadhana. I sometimes turned to the Gita for light when there was a question or a difficulty and usually received help or an answer from it. It is a fact that I was hearing constantly the voice of Vivekananda speaking to me for a fortnight in the jail in my solitary meditation and felt his presence. The voice spoke only on a special and limited but very important field of spiritual experience and it ceased as soon as it had finished saying all that it had to say on that subject."[1]

Read also the following account dictated by him:

"He started Yoga by himself without a Guru getting the rule from a friend, a disciple of Brahmananda of Ganga Matt; it was confined at first to assiduous practice of Pranayam (at one time for six or more hours a day). There was no conflict or wavering between Yoga and politics; when he started Yoga, he carried on both without any idea of opposition between them. He wanted however to find a Guru. He met a Naga Sannyasi, one of the heads, in the course of this search, but did not accept him as Guru, but was confirmed by him in a belief in Yoga-power when he saw him cure Barin[2] in almost a moment of a violent and clinging hill fever by merely cutting through a glassful of water crosswise with a knife while he repeated a silent mantra. Barin drank and was cured. Sri Aurobindo also met Brahmananda and was greatly impressed by him; but he had no helper or Guru in Yoga till he met Lele in Baroda and that was only for a short time. Meditating only for three days with Lele, he followed his instructions for silencing the mind and freeing it from the constant pressure of thought; he entered into an absolute and complete silence of mind and indeed of the whole consciousness and in that silence had suddenly the enduring realisation of the indefinable Brahma, Tat, in which the whole universe seemed to be unreal and only That existed. This silence he kept for several months and it remained always within him; for when activity returned, it proceeded on the surface and within him all was calm....

[1] *Sri Aurobindo and His Ashram* pp. 44-5
[2] Sri Aurobindo's younger brother.

Before coming to Pondicherry Sri Aurobindo had already realised in full two of the four great realisations on which his Yoga and his spiritual philosophy are founded. The first he had gained while meditating with the Maharashtrian Yogi, Vishnu Bhasker Lele, at Baroda in January 1908; it was the realisation of the silent spaceless and timeless Brahman gained after a complete and abiding stillness of the whole consciousness and attended at first by the overwhelming feeling and perception of the total unreality of the world, though this feeling disappeared after his second realisation which was that of the cosmic consciousness and of the Divine as all beings and all that is, which happened in the Alipore Jail. To the other two realisations, that of the supreme Reality with the static and dynamic Brahman as its two aspects and that of the higher planes of consciousness leading up to the Supermind, he was already on his way in his meditations in the Alipore Jail. Moreover, he had accepted from Lele as the principle of his sadhana to rely wholly on the Divine and His guidance alone both for his sadhana and his outward actions."[1]

There are besides, in this book tit-bits bearing on other contemporary personalities like Sri C. R. Das, the well-known laweyr who defended Sri Aurobindo at the trial. Sri Das, we are informed, was a family friend of the Khapardes and he once confided to the elder brother of the author:

"When I made the speech in defence of Sri Aurobindo in the High Court, I was not aware of what I spoke. From the moment I stood up, only one sentence would arise in my mind. Then would come another sentence. The end of that would be followed by the rise of another and so on....As the speech proceeded thus, the Judge took out his kerchief from the pocket and wiped his eyes, when I had finished he was still wiping."

The author records C. R. Das telling that at times he used to be moved by a spirit called 'Gulabchandra', and goes on to say that there is no knowing who inspired him in making the Speech—the spirit Gulabchandra, or Sri Aurobindo himself or his Guru or who else. We do not think there is any doubt left on the matter after what Sri Aurobindo declared at Uttarpara:

"You have all heard the name of the man who put away from him all other thoughts and abandoned all his practice, who sat up half the night day after day for months and broke his health to save me—Srijut Chittaranjan

[1] *Sri Aurobindo and His Ashram* pp. 41-6

Das. When I saw him, I was satisfied, but I still thought it necessary to write instructions. Then all that was put away from me and I had the message from within, 'This is the man who will save you from the snares put around your feet. Put aside those papers. It is not you who will instruct him. I will instruct him.' "[1]

The book also contains an article on *Sri Aurobindo and Theosophy* by Sri R.S.Bhagwat, tracing a similarity between certain lines of thought in Theosophy and the Teaching of Sri Aurobindo. The author draws attention, for instance, the finding of theosophists, after considerable research in the field of Reincarnation, that for an evolutionary being which has reached human level there is no regression to a lower birth in the scale of life and Sri Aurobindo's statement: "It is surely impossible that a conversion so decisive made by nature should be reversed." (*The Life Divine*, Vol. II, Chapt. 20). We may be permitted to add, however, that Sri Aurobindo has envisaged a possibility of inferior birth in certain extreme cases where the being insists on having that particular experience,—even then only a part—a "vital" part—of the being reincarnates. Mr. Bhagwat, sees a parallel in Sri Aurobindo's thought, to the belief of Theosophists that the leadership of the human race will shortly pass from man the intellectual being to man the 'intuitive being' and that this will form the sixth 'sub-race.' He quotes Sri Aurobindo: "Now there will be established on earth a gnostic consciousness and power which will shape a race of gnostic spiritual beings... the supramental change is a thing decreed and inevitable in the evolution of earth-consciousness."

Another interesting parallel is on the role of the Jivanmukta Purushas of the past in the progress of the present-day humanity. Quoting the following lines from Sri Aurobindo's poem 'The Mahatma Kuthumi':

> And (I) walk mid men, choosing my instruments,
> Testing, rejecting, confirming souls—
> Vessels of the Spirit; for the golden age
> in Kali comes."

the author draws attention to a like idea expressed by Dr. Annie Beasant in her book 'Avataras': "They are choosing one by one, trying and testing those who shall form the nucleus of the sixth Race. They are taking soul by soul, subjecting each to many a test, to many an ordeal to see if there be

[1] *Speeches* p. 71.

strength out of which a new Race can spring." And the author concludes that this similarity of thought and of expression is due to the sameness of the Truth-basis and Knowledge underlying Theosophy and Sri Aurobindo's Teaching. We would not be so bold as to say with the author that the content (occult and other) of both is the same or that their bases are identical. Truths are indeed universal; but they vary in their consequence depending upon the manner and the purpose for which they are tapped and functionalised, and the source from which these come. We do not speak at the moment of the grades or orders of Truths—each valid in its domain—nor of the particular realm of truths with which Theosophy concerns itself unlike the cosmic range of the Problem of Man for which Sri Aurobindo's Yoga and Philosophy finds a comprehensive solution.

All told, the book makes very interesting reading and is a valuable addition to the extant biographical literature on Sri Aurobindo.

M. P. PANDIT

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